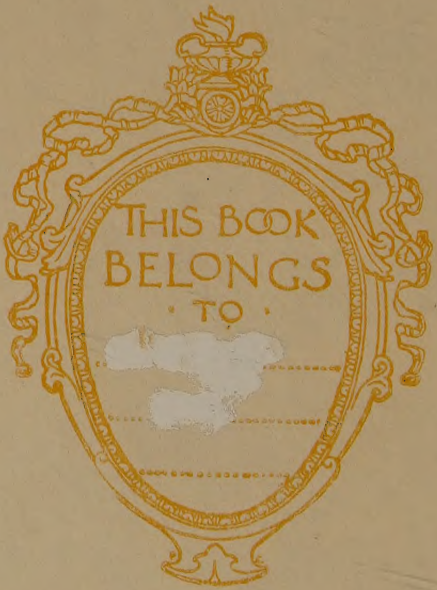
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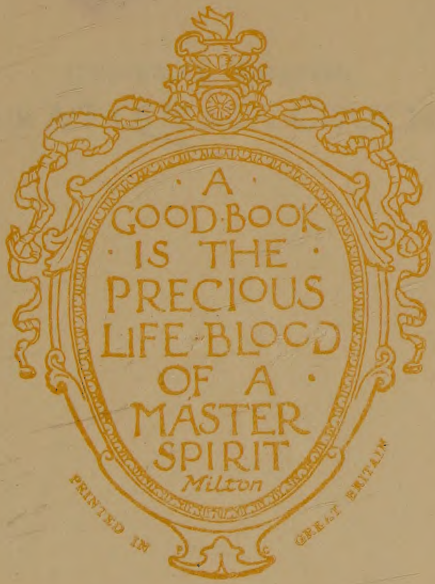
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IS THE
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OF A
MASTER
SPIRIT
Milton
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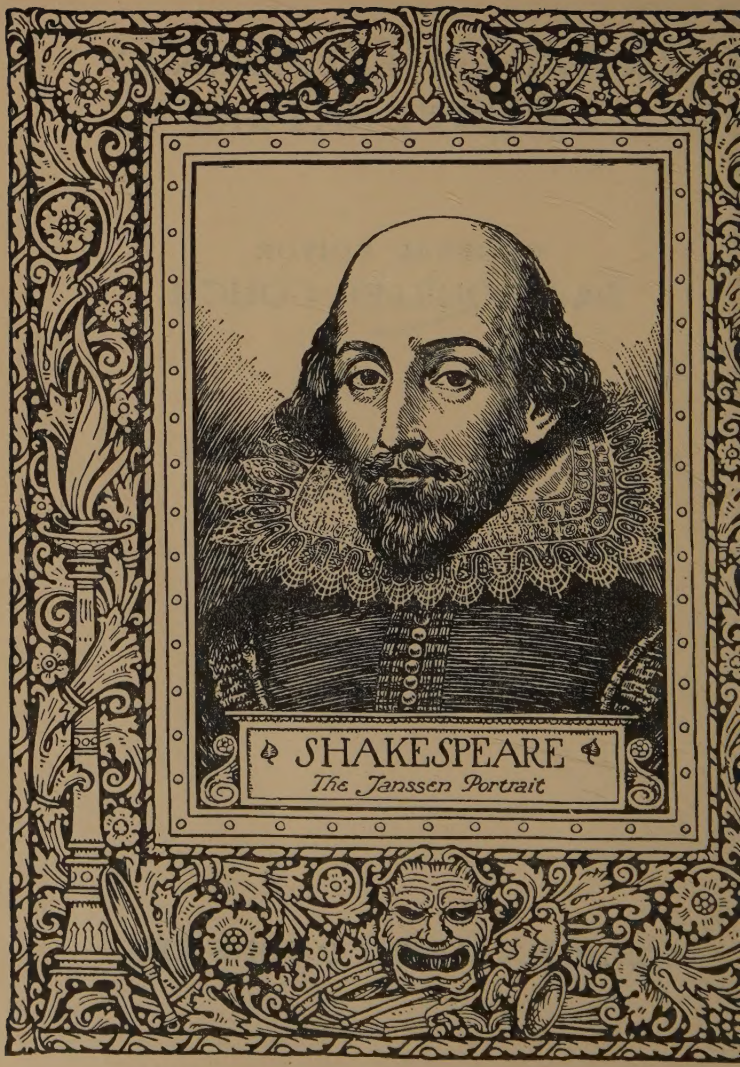
The KINGS TREASURIES OF LITERATURE

GENERAL EDITOR:
SIR A·T· QUILLER COUCH

LONDON: J·M·DENT & SONS LTD.


SHAKESPEARE
The Janssen Portrait

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

EDITED BY
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M. A.

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Aldine House · Bedford Street · London
First published in this edition 1921
Last reprinted 1961

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAY AND THE STORY

ALTHOUGH Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice* more than three hundred years ago, it remains one of the best known and best liked plays in English. This is due to a variety of causes, the characters, the plots, the power and beauty of the language being all of the best. Yet many people proclaim that they do not like Shakespeare, either acted or read, and so it seems best to think for a while what is the right way to approach the play, especially for those to whom this may be the first they have read. To begin with we must remember that Shakespeare wrote his plays for acting, not for reading by students of literature or any one else. Indeed many of his plays were not printed for the general public till several years later. They were written for acting on the Elizabethan stage for an Elizabethan audience, and if we are still acting and reading them it is because there is something enduring about them, just as there is about the story of Cinderella or Ulysses, both of which are thousands of years old, but are of universal interest. Now a play differs from a story in that the characters throughout speak for themselves, and always we must try to realize these characters and read or speak as though for the time being we were not ourselves, but they. The next

best thing to acting is to have enough people to read the different parts, each endeavouring, if not to act, at all events to provide different voices, and to suggest the right spirit and feeling required. This is easy to do, and there are two or three reasons why it is easier with Shakespeare's plays than might be supposed by those who are only familiar with the theatre of to-day. For in the theatre of three hundred years ago there was very little scenery and none of the elaborate effects of decoration and lighting to produce an illusion—though dress received a good deal of careful attention. This will be explained more fully elsewhere; for the present it is enough to notice that much was left to the imagination, and it is far more effective to give one's own imagination play even in an ordinary room, than to watch magnificent effects artificially produced without entering into the spirit of the characters. Again, in Shakespeare's time no women were allowed to act; so that a group of men or boys, or a group of women or girls, forming a class or study-circle may read or act without feeling they are unduly handicapped, though undoubtedly a mixed group will find some parts go much better. Further, it does not really matter if the speech of the readers is not what is considered perfect in pronunciation, or not free from dialect; probably that may bring them nearer to the speech of Shakespeare's day, and in any case the sense is what matters, and clear forcible expression, bringing out the meaning, is worth more than

polite, correctly standardized speech without force and feeling. Some people are upset if they hear Shakespeare read with a Cockney or Yorkshire or Somerset pronunciation; and if they have paid to see a professional company produce the play they are right; but a group of students will really do far better to speak their own language than to cultivate an artificial speech; and in any case they will in this play be impersonating Italians, and no other stretch of imagination can equal in difficulty that required by the pretence that we are sixteenth-century Italians.

So much for the general attitude of mind; we are to study a play, and our essential business is to understand the characters of men and women as they play their parts in the scenes in which they find themselves; and the power of words to express their thoughts and experiences.

What is the setting of the play? It is Italy in the sixteenth century and in particular Venice. Now Venice at that time was not only a wealthy and artistic and important Italian city. Venice was a country, with its army and politics and foreign affairs; this state ranked with France and England amongst European powers, and above all else it had the first place amongst the trading countries and cities of Europe; it was the great link between East and West. Here then lies the scene, amidst wealth and culture, and except for meeting a servant or two, and a poor old man, we shall move amongst the upper

classes. The play is called *The Merchant of Venice: a Comedy*, but we had better understand two points in advance to safeguard against some probable disappointment. Antonio, the merchant, is not the chief or the most interesting character in the play; and *comedy* must not be interpreted as having much relation to our idea of what is comic; but rather a play dealing with events that turn out well and happily, as opposed to one in which great opportunities are somehow missed, and the world seems somehow wrong, and we are presented with a *tragedy*.

Little more introduction is needed, but it may be well to point out that there is really more than one 'plot' in the play, and it is a matter to think over as the play develops, what is really the chief plot. Running throughout the whole play are the fortunes and misfortunes of the merchant, Antonio. In order to help his dearest friend, Bassanio, he becomes involved in a dangerous bargain with an embittered Jew moneylender, Shylock by name, and this leads us very near indeed to tragedy. But Bassanio needs the money in order to woo the famous heiress, Portia, and side by side with villainy runs a love story; and side by side with it run two other love stories, one of Bassanio's friend Gratiano and Portia's maid, Nerissa, the other, a young Venetian gentleman, Lorenzo, and Shylock's daughter, Jessica. All these stories woven together make up the play.

PORTIA

'NOTE broadly, in the outset, Shakespeare has no heroes;—he has only heroines. . . .

'What shall I say of . . . the calmly devoted wisdom of the "unlessoned girl" who appears among the helplessness, the blindness, and the vindictive passions of men, as a gentle angel, to save merely by her presence, and defeat the worst intensities of crime by her smile?'

JOHN RUSKIN: *Sesame and Lilies.*

THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAY

THE DUKE OF VENICE.

THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON } suitors to Portia.

ANTONIO, a merchant of Venice.

BASSANIO, his friend, suitor likewise to Portia.

SALANIO, SALARINO, GRATIANO, SALERIO } friends to Antonio and Bassanio.

LORENZO, in love with Jessica.

SHYLOCK, a rich Jew.

TUBAL, a Jew, his friend.

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, the clown, servant to Shylock.

OLD GOBBO, father to Launcelot.

LEONARDO, servant to Bassanio.

BALTHASAR, STEPHANO } servants to Portia.

PORTIA, a rich heiress.

NERISSA, her waiting-maid.

JESSICA, daughter to Shylock.

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Jailer, Servants to Portia, and other Attendants.

SCENE: *Partly at Venice, and partly at Belmont, the seat of Portia, on the Continent.*

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

ACT FIRST

Scene I

Venice. A street

Enter Antonio, Salarino, and Salanio.

Ant. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.
Salar. Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There, where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curt'sy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

5. *I am to learn.* I have yet to learn.
11. *Pageants of the sea.* The idea is that of a moving show.

Salan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind;
Peering in maps for ports, and piers, and roads;
And every object, that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
Would make me sad.

Salar. My wind, cooling my broth,
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great at sea might do.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand
Vailing her high top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks;
And, in a word, but even now worth this,

18. *Plucking the grass . . . the wind.* Holding up a blade of grass to find which way the wind blows.
19. *Roads.* Roadsteads, where a ship might anchor.
21. *Out of doubt.* Doubtless, certainly.
27. *Andrew.* The name of his ship.
28–9. *Vailing her high . . . her burial.* Letting her top-sail stoop lower than her hull in a sort of loving embrace as the ship sinks into the sand.
35–6. *Even now, etc.* One moment worth so much; the next, nothing.

And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this; and shall I lack the thought,
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
But tell not me; I know, Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.
Ant. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.
Salar. Why, then you are in love.
Ant. Fie, fie!
Salar. Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
Because you are not merry: and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper;
And other of such vinegar aspect,
That they 'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

42. *Bottom.* Hull, hold.

50. *Two-headed Janus.* The Roman god with two faces, one looking forward, the other backward. Here the idea is connected with two kinds of men, merry and sad.

53. *Like parrots at a bag-piper.* With harsh screaming laughter at melancholy music.

56. *Nestor.* The oldest, wisest, and gravest of the Greeks in the Trojan War. If he laughed the joke must indeed be a good one.

Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano.

Salan. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano, and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:
We leave you now with better company.
Salar. I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.
Ant. Your worth is very dear in my regard.
I take it, your own business calls on you,
And you embrace the occasion to depart.
Salar. Good-morrow, my good lords.
Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say, when?
You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?
Salar. We 'll make our leisures to attend on yours.
[*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.*
Lor. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you: but, at dinner-time,
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.
Bass. I will not fail you.
Gra. You look not well, Signior Antonio;
You have too much respect upon the world:
They lose it that do buy it with much care:
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.

61. *Prevented.* As nearly always in Shakespeare, the Prayer Book and the Bible, the word has the original sense of 'come before, forestall, anticipate.'

74. *You have . . . world.* You take life too seriously.

Ant. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage, where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.
Gra. Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes, and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio—
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks—
There are a sort of men, whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond;
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;
As who should say, 'I am Sir Oracle,
And, when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!'
O my Antonio, I do know of these,
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing; when, I am very sure
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears,
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.

85. *Creep into the jaundice.* Great depression does sometimes bring on jaundice.

89. *Do cream and mantle.* Become overcast with a set expression, like a stagnant pond with scum.

92. *Conceit.* Conception or thought, not a puffed-up idea of oneself.

98–9. *Damn those ears . . . brothers fools.* People would be forced to call them fools despite the warning of Matt. v. 22.

I 'll tell thee more of this another time:
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:
I 'll end my exhortation after dinner.

Lor. Well, we will leave you, then, till dinner-time:
I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

Gra. Well, keep me company but two years moe,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

Ant. Farewell: I 'll grow a talker for this gear.

Gra. Thanks, i' faith; for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried.

[*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo.*

Ant. Is that any thing now?

Bass. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them: and when you have them, they are not worth the search.

Ant. Well, tell me now, what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promised to tell me of?

Bass. 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,
By something showing a more swelling port

108. *Moe.* More—a common form in Shakespeare.
125–6. *Showing a more swelling port.* Living with more style than my income warrants.

Than my faint means would grant continuance:
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged
From such a noble rate; but my chief care
Is, to come fairly off from the great debts,
Wherein my time, something too prodigal,
Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love;
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburthen all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.
Ant. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assured,
My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.
Bass. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
The self-same way with more advised watch,
To find the other forth; and by adventuring both,
I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,
Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much; and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost: but if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both,
Or bring your latter hazard back again,
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

131. *Gaged.* Pledged. 133. *Warranty.* Guarantee.
140. *Occasions.* Requirements. 143. *Advised.* Careful.

Ant. You know me well; and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance;
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost,
Than if you had made waste of all I have:
Then do but say to me what I should do,
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak.
Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left;
And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages:
Her name is Portia; nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth;
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors: and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate!
Ant. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;

155. *Wind.* To approach me, like a sportsman stalking his game by roundabout stealth.

167. *Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.* The wife of Brutus, and chief woman character in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar.*

172. *Colchos' strand.* The shore of Colchos, on the Black Sea, where Jason sought and found the Golden Fleece.

Neither have I money, nor commodity
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;
Try what my credit can in Venice do:
That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is; and I no question make,
To have it of my trust, or for my sake. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II

Belmont. A room in Portia's house

Enter Portia and Nerissa.

Por. By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

Ner. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean: superfluity comes sooner by white hairs; but competency lives longer.

Por. Good sentences, and well pronounced.

Ner. They would be better, if well followed.

180. *Present.* Immediate.
186. *Trust.* Business credit.
8. *Mean.* Average.

Por. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood; but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose'! I may neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?

Ner. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men, at their death, have good inspirations: therefore, the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead — whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you —will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly, but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

14. *Chapels.* Nothing to do with nonconformists. Usually 'chapels of ease,' where a church was too distant for convenience.

Por. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

Ner. First there is the Neapolitan prince.

Por. Ay, that 's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself.

Ner. Then there is the County Palatine.

Por. He doth nothing but frown; as who should say, 'if you will not have me, choose': he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

Ner. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

Por. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but, he!—why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's; a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine: he is every man in no man; if a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering: he will fence with his own

42. *Level.* Aim true, make a shot at and hit.
49. *County Palatine.* The Count of the Palatinate, a German state on the Rhine.

shadow: if I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him; for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

Ner. What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

Por. You know I say nothing to him; for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian; and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper man's picture; but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere.

Ner. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

Por. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him; for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety, and sealed under for another.

Ner. How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

Por. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober; and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is

88–9. *The Frenchman became his surety.* The French had often promised assistance to the Scotch in their quarrels with England.

drunk: when he is best, he is a little worse than a man; and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast: an the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

Ner. If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will, if you should refuse to accept him.

Por. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket; for, if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I 'll be married to a sponge.

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home, and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets.

Por. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable; for there is

96. *An.* If.

102. *Rhenish.* Of the Rhine district.

114. *Sibylla.* The old prophetess who sold books of wisdom to King Tarquin. Apollo promised her that her years should be as many as the grains of sand she held in her hands. We should say: 'As old as Methusaleh.'

115. *Diana.* The maiden huntress-goddess.

not one among them but I dote on his very absence; and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

Ner. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar, and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

Por. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, he was so called.

Ner. True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

Por. I remember him well; and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a Serving-man.

How now! what news?

Serv. The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave: and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco; who brings word, the prince his master will be here to-night.

Por. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the conditions of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.

142. *Shrive.* Act as my priestly confessor.

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.
Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III

Venice. A public place

Enter Bassanio and Shylock.

Shy. Three thousand ducats; well.
Bass. Ay, sir, for three months.
Shy. For three months; well.
Bass. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.
Shy. Antonio shall become bound; well.
Bass. May you stead me? will you pleasure me? shall I know your answer?
Shy. Three thousand ducats for three months, and Antonio bound.
Bass. Your answer to that.
Shy. Antonio is a good man.
Bass. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

1. *Ducats.* Probably a silver coin worth between 4*s.* and 5*s.* in Elizabeth's day. But this would be worth at least eight times as much before 1914. Multiply by twenty to get up-to-date figures, but also remember great wealth was much less then than now. Shakespeare bought a big house in Stratford for £60.
7. *Stead.* Assist.

Shy. Ho, no, no, no, no: my meaning, in saying he is a good man, is to have you understand me, that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates; and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.

Bass. Be assured you may.

Shy. I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

Bass. If it please you to dine with us.

Shy. Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

35. *Nazarite.* Jesus was a *Nazarene,* and Samson a *Nazarite* or Nazirite. But Shakespeare was only following an error of the Bishops' Bible, and others.

Conjured. 'Ordered by a superior power,' not 'performed a conjuring trick.'

Enter Antonio.

Bass. This is Signior Antonio.
Shy. [*Aside.*] How like a fawning publican he looks!
I hate him for he is a Christian;
But more for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him,
He hates our sacred nation; and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,
If I forgive him!
Bass. Shylock, do you hear?
Shy. I am debating of my present store;
And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
Do you desire? [*To Ant.*]. Rest you fair, good signior;
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.
Ant. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow,

42. *Fawning publican.* Grovelling tax-gatherer. (Latin, *publicanus.*)
46. *Usance.* Interest.
47. *Upon the hip.* At a disadvantage, as in wrestling.
56. *Gross.* Full sum.

By taking nor by giving of excess,
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I 'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd
How much ye would?
Shy. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.
Ant. And for three months.
Shy. I had forgot; three months, you told me so.
Well then, your bond; and let me see; but hear you;
Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage.
Ant. I do never use it.
Shy. When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep—
This Jacob from our holy Abram was,
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,
The third possessor; ay, he was the third—
Ant. And what of him? did he take interest?
Shy. No, not take interest; not, as you would say,
Directly interest: mark what Jacob did,
When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest:
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.
Ant. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for;

64. *Ripe.* Like fruit that wants gathering. Suggests the next stage would be bad.
71. *Advantage.* Terms that bring gain.
74. *Wise mother.* It was Rebecca who led Jacob to cheat Esau.
80. *Eanlings.* Newborn lambs.

A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven.
Was this inserted to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?
Shy. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:
But note me, signior.
Ant. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul, producing holy witness,
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek;
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!
Shy. Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum,
Three months from twelve; then, let me see; the rate—
Ant. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?
Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help:

103. *Sufferance . . . tribe.* The enduring of wrongs is our special characteristic.

105. *Jewish gaberdine.* A gaberdine is a long cloak. Probably 'Jewish' means 'because I am a Jew,' seeing that the only distinctive dress of the Venetian Jews was a hat or turban.

Go to, then; you come to me, and you say
'Shylock, we would have moneys': you say so;
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say
'Hath a dog money? is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' or
Shall I bend low and in a bondsman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
Say this—
'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
You spurn'd me such a day; another time
You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
I 'll lend you thus much moneys'?

Ant. I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends; for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy;
Who if he break, thou mayest with better face
Exact the penalty.

Shy. Why, look you, how you storm!
I would be friends with you, and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
Supply your present wants, and take no doit

110. *Void your rheum.* Spit.
112. *Suit.* The thing you sue for.
133. *Doit.* Farthing.

Of usance for my moneys, and you 'll not hear me:
This is kind I offer.
Bass. This were kindness.
Shy. This kindness will I show.
Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.
Ant. Content, i' faith: I 'll seal to such a bond,
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.
Bass. You shall not seal to such a bond for me:
I 'll rather dwell in my necessity.
Ant. Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it:
Within these two months, that 's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.
Shy. O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this;
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,

138. *Single.* On your surety alone.
141–2. *Let the forfeit . . . equal pound.* Let an exact pound of your flesh be named as the forfeit.

As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.
Ant. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.
Shy. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
Give him direction for this merry bond;
And I will go and purse the ducats straight;
See to my house, left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave; and presently
I will be with you.
Ant. Hie thee, gentle Jew. [*Exit Shylock.*
The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.
Bass. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.
Ant. Come on: in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day.
[*Exeunt.*

168. *Fearful.* Cowardly.

ACT SECOND

SCENE I

Belmont. A room in Portia's house

Flourish of cornets. Enter the Prince of Morocco and his train; Portia, Nerissa, and others attending

Mor. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phoebus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Have fear'd the valiant: by my love, I swear
The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too: I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.
Por. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:

2. *Shadow'd.* Dusky.
5. *Phoebus.* Phoebus Apollo was the sun-god.
9. *Fear'd.* Frightened.
14. *Nice direction.* Careful choice.

But if my father had not scanted me
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair
As any come I have look'd on yet
For my affection.

Mor. Even for that I thank you:
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets,
To try my fortune. By this scimitar
That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
Pluck the young sucking-cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
So is Alcides beaten by his page;
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

Por. You must take your chance

25. *Sophy*. Shah.

26. *Solyman*. Solyman the Magnificent, Sultan of Turkey (lived 1490–1566): he often defeated the Persians.

32. *Hercules and Lichas*. Lichas, servant of Hercules, brought his master the poisoned shirt of Nessus: Hercules threw Lichas into the sea.

35. *Alcides*. A name often applied to Hercules as grandson of Alceus.

And either not attempt to choose at all,
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong,
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage: therefore be advised.

Mor. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.

Por. First, forward to the temple: after dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

Mor. Good fortune then!
To make me blest or cursed'st among men.
[*Cornets, and exeunt.*

Scene II

Venice. A street

Enter Launcelot.

Laun. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow, and tempts me, saying to me, 'Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot,' or 'good Gobbo,' or 'good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away.' My conscience says, 'No; take heed, honest

43. *Nor will not.* Refers to 'speak' not 'be advised.'
1. *Will serve me.* Perhaps 'will have to serve'; the fiend tells him to run away and he wants to think his conscience tells him the same. Or is it meant coaxingly: 'Of course my kind little conscience will . . .'

Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo,' or, as aforesaid, 'honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels.' Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: 'Via!' says the fiend; 'away!' says the fiend; 'for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind,' says the fiend, 'and run.' Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, 'My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son'—or rather an honest woman's son;—for, indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste;—well, my conscience says, 'Launcelot, budge not.' 'Budge,' says the fiend. 'Budge not,' says my conscience. 'Conscience,' say I, 'you counsel well'; 'Fiend,' say I, 'you counsel well': to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnal; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run.

11. *Via.* Away, forward.
30. *Incarnal.* Launcelot's slip for 'incarnate.'

Enter Old Gobbo, with a basket.

Gob. Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

Laun. [*Aside.*] O heavens, this is my true-begotten father! who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind, knows me not: I will try confusions with him.

Gob. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

Laun. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but, at the next turning of all, on your left; marry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

Gob. By God's sonties, 'twill be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

Laun. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? [*Aside.*] Mark me now; now I will raise the waters. Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. No master, sir, but a poor man's son: his father, though I say it, is an honest exceeding poor man, and, God be thanked, well to live.

38. *True-begotten.* The child is begotten, not the father. Either another misused word, or deliberate fooling by Launcelot.

39. *More than sand-blind.* As though there were three stages of blindness, the last being 'stone-blind.'

40. *Confusions.* He probably means 'conclusions.'

46. *Marry.* Indeed, to be sure. (Though connected in origin with the Virgin Mary there is little idea of an oath.)

49. *Sonties.* 'Saints' is most likely the meaning.

Laun. Well, let his father be what a' will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

Gob. Your worship's friend, and Launcelot, sir.

Laun. But I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

Laun. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased; or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

Gob. Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

Laun. Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop? Do you know me, father?

Gob. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman: but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God rest his soul, alive or dead?

Laun. Do you not know me, father?

Gob. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

Laun. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: give me your blessing: truth will come to light; murder cannot

58. *What a' will.* What he may. *Ur, oo,* for *he,* survive in some dialects.

65. *Ergo.* Latin for 'therefore,' but meaningless here.

be hid long; a man's son may; but, at the length, truth will out.

Gob. Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

Laun. Pray you, let 's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing: I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

Gob. I cannot think you are my son.

Laun. I know not what I shall think of that: but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man; and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

Gob. Her name is Margery, indeed: I 'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipped might he be! what a beard hast thou got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.

Laun. It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward: I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him.

Gob. Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

99. *Lord worshipped might he be.* Either 'Would to heaven he might be Launcelot,' or 'The Lord's name be praised.'

100. *Beard hast thou got.* Launcelot has let his father feel his hair instead of his face.

101. *Fill-horse.* Shaft-horse.

Laun. Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master 's a very Jew: give him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! here comes the man: to him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter Bassanio, with Leonardo and other followers.

Bass. You may do so; but let it be so hasted, that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters delivered; put the liveries to making; and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging. [*Exit a Servant.*

Laun. To him, father.

Gob. God bless your worship!

Bass. Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me?

Gob. Here 's my son, sir, a poor boy—

Laun. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man; that would, sir—as my father shall specify—

Gob. He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve—

110–11. *I have set up my rest.* I am determined.
134. *Infection.* He means 'affection.'

Laun. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire—as my father shall specify—

Gob. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins—

Laun. To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me—as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you—

Gob. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is—

Laun. In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and, though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father.

Bass. One speak for both. What would you?

Laun. Serve you, sir.

Gob. That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

Bass. I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit:
Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment
To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Laun. The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

140. *Cater-cousins.* Good friends.
143. *Frutify.* Certify.
147. *Impertinent.* He means 'pertinent, relating to.'
153. *Defect.* He means 'effect, purport, meaning.'
156. *Preferr'd.* Promoted.

Bass. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.
Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out. Give him a livery
More guarded than his fellows': see it done.
Laun. Father, in. I cannot get a service, no; I have ne'er a tongue in my head. Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer table which doth offer to swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune. . . . Well, if Fortune be a woman, she 's a good wench for this gear. Father, come; I 'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye. [*Exeunt Launcelot and old Gobbo.*
Bass. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this:
These things being bought and orderly bestow'd,
Return in haste, for I do feast to-night
My best-esteem'd acquaintance: hie thee, go.
Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter Gratiano.

Gra. Where is your master?
Leon. Yonder, sir, he walks. [*Exit.*
Gra. Signior Bassanio—
Bass. Gratiano!
Gra. I have a suit to you.
Bass. You have obtain'd it.
Gra. You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont.
Bass. Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano:

165. *Guarded.* Richly braided.

Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice;
Parts that become thee happily enough,
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;
But where thou art not known, why there they show
Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain
To allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit; lest, through thy wild behaviour,
I be misconstrued in the place I go to,
And lose my hopes.

Gra. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely;
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh, and say 'amen';
Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

Bass. Well, we shall see your bearing.

Gra. Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not gauge me
By what we do to-night.

Bass. No, that were pity:
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well:
I have some business.

192. *Skipping.* Undignified.

Gra. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest:
But we will visit you at supper-time. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III

The same. A room in Shylock's house

Enter Jessica and Launcelot.

Jes. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell; and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well; there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell: I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

Laun. Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! if a Christian be not in some way thy father, I am much deceived. But, adieu: these foolish drops do something drown my manly spirit: adieu.

Jes. Farewell, good Launcelot. [*Exit Launcelot.*
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian, and thy loving wife. [*Exit.*

10. *Exhibit.* Should be 'prohibit,' hold back.

Scene IV

The same. A street

Enter Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Salanio.

Lor. Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
Disguise us at my lodging, and return
All in an hour.
Gra. We have not made good preparation.
Salar. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.
Salan. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,
And better in my mind not undertook.
Lor. 'Tis now but four o'clock: we have two hours
To furnish us.

Enter Launcelot, with a letter.

Friend Launcelot, what 's the news?
Laun. An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem to signify.
Lor. I know the hand: in faith, 'tis a fair hand;
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.
Gra. Love-news, in faith.
Laun. By your leave, sir.
Lor. Whither goest thou?
Laun. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup to-night with my new master the Christian.
Lor. Hold here, take this: tell gentle Jessica

6. *Quaintly*. Gracefully.

I will not fail her; speak it privately.
Go, gentlemen, [*Exit Launcelot.*
Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?
I am provided of a torch-bearer.

Salar. Ay, marry, I 'll begone about it straight.

Salan. And so will I.

Lor. Meet me and Gratiano
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

Salar. 'Tis good we do so. [*Exeunt Salar. and Salan.*

Gra. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

Lor. I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house;
What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with;
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse,
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest:
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [*Exeunt.*

22. *Masque.* Torchlight procession.

Scene V

The same. Before Shylock's house

Enter Shylock and Launcelot.

Shy. Why, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio:—
What, Jessica!—thou shalt not gormandise,
As thou hast done with me:—What, Jessica!—
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out;—
Why, Jessica, I say!
Laun. Why, Jessica!
Shy. Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.
Laun. Your worship was wont to tell me that I could no nothing without bidding.

Enter Jessica.

Jes. Call you? what is your will?
Shy. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:
There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?
I am not bid for love; they flatter me:
But yet I 'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,
Look to my house. I am right loath to go:
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

3. *What, Jessica!* An exclamation of impatience, and a call.

Laun. I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth expect your reproach.

Shy. So do I his.

Laun. And they have conspired together, I will not say you shall see a masque; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black-Monday last at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year, in the afternoon.

Shy. What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica:
Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum,
And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,
Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces;
But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements:
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night:
But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah;
Say I will come.

Laun. I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at window, for all this;
There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewess's eye. [*Exit.*

20. *Expect.* Await.
Reproach. May be another of Launcelot's slips, for 'approach, coming.'
33. *Varnish'd.* Painted.

Shy. What says the fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?
Jes. His words were, 'Farewell, mistress'; nothing else.
Shy. The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder;
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat: drones hive not with me;
Therefore I part with him; and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste
His borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica, go in:
Perhaps I will return immediately:
Do as I bid you; shut doors after you:
Fast bind, fast find,
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [*Exit.*
Jes. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,
I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [*Exit.*

Scene VI

The Same

Enter Gratiano and Salarino, masqued.

Gra. This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.
Salar. His hour is almost past.

44. *Hagar's.* Hagar was Abraham's inferior wife, and the mother of Ishmael. Launcelot is a Gentile and a servant, despicable like the outcast.
46. *Patch.* Poor creature.
1. *Pent-house.* Properly a shed, but here part of a house projecting over the pavement.

Gra. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.
Salar. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
To keep obliged faith unforfeited!
Gra. That ever holds: who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread again
His tedious measures with the unbated fire
That he did pace them first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.
How like a younker or a prodigal
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind!
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,
Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind!
Salar. Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

Enter Lorenzo.

Lor. Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait:
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
I 'll watch as long for you then. Approach;
Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who 's within?

5. *Venus' pigeons.* Venus' chariot was drawn by doves, as Juno's by peacocks.
14. *Younker.* Smart stripling.
15. *Scarfed bark.* Ship decorated with flags.
16. *Strumpet.* Careless, vicious.

Enter Jessica, above, in boy's clothes.

Jes. Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I 'll swear that I do know your tongue.
Lor. Lorenzo, and thy love.
Jes. Lorenzo, certain; and my love, indeed,
For who love I so much? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?
Lor. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.
Jes. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange:
But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit;
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformed to a boy.
Lor. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.
Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;
And I should be obscured.
Lor. So are you, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.
But come at once;
For the close night doth play the runaway,
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

43. *'Tis an office of discovery.* The object of torch-bearing is to reveal.
47. *Close.* That keeps secrets.

Jes. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some mo ducats, and be with you straight.
[*Exit above.*
Gra. Now, by my hood, a Gentile, and no Jew.
Lor. Beshrew me but I love her heartily;
For she is wise, if I can judge of her;
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true;
And true she is, as she hath proved herself;
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,
Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

Enter Jessica, below.

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen; away!
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.
[*Exit with Jessica and Salarino.*

Enter Antonio.

Ant. Who 's there?
Gra. Signior Antonio!
Ant. Fie, fie, Gratiano; where are all the rest?
'Tis nine o'clock: our friends all stay for you.
No masque to-night: the wind is come about;
Bassanio presently will go aboard:
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.
Gra. I am glad on't: I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night. [*Exeunt.*

Scene VII

Belmont. A room in Portia's house

Flourish of cornets. Enter Portia, with the Prince of Morocco, and their trains.

Por. Go draw aside the curtains, and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.
Now make your choice.
Mor. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire';
The second, silver, which this promise carries,
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves';
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
How shall I know if I do choose the right?
Por. The one of them contains my picture, prince:
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.
Mor. Some god direct my judgment! Let me see;
I will survey the inscriptions back again.
What says this leaden casket?
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
Must give—for what? for lead? hazard for lead?
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages:

12. *Withal.* Along with it.

A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I 'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver with her virgin hue?
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady:
And yet to be afeared of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve! Why, that 's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces and in qualities of breeding;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?
Let 's see once more this saying graved in gold;
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
Why, that 's the lady; all the world desires her;
From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint:
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia:
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head

22. *Virgin*. Here means bright, pure, and cold.
41. *Hyrcanian deserts*. On the south and south-east shores of the Caspian Sea, a wild and barbarous land.

Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits; but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is 't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought: it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she 's immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold, but that 's insculp'd upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key:
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

Por. There, take it, prince; and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours. [*He unlocks the golden casket.*

Mor. O hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll! I 'll read the writing.

[*Reads.*] All that glisters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold

51. *Rib her cerecloth.* Enclose her shroud.
56. *Angel.* The English coin of this name was worth about 10*s.* in Shakespeare's day. It bore the device of St Michael spearing a dragon.
57. *Insculp'd.* 'Engraved' or else 'embossed.'
63. *A carrion Death.* Skull from which the flesh has rotted off.
65. *Glisters.* Glistens.

But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgment old,
Your answer had not been inscroll'd:
Fare you well; your suit is cold.
Cold, indeed; and labour lost:
Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!
Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.
[*Exit with his train. Flourish of cornets.*
Por. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
Let all of his complexion choose me so. [*Exeunt.*

Scene VIII

Venice. A street

Enter Salarino and Salanio.

Salar. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:
With him is Gratiano gone along;
And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.
Salan. The villain Jew with outcries raised the Duke
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.
Salar. He came too late, the ship was under sail:
But there the Duke was given to understand
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:

Besides, Antonio certified the Duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.
Salan. I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl!
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats!'
Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.
Salan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.
Salar. Marry, well remember'd.
I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarried
A vessel of our country richly fraught:
I thought upon Antonio when he told me;
And wish'd in silence that it were not his.
Salan. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.
Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:

12. *Passion.* Feeling, emotion.

Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return: he answer'd, 'Do not so;
Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time;
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love:
Be merry; and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship, and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently become you there':
And even there, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible
He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

Salan. I think he only loves the world for him.
I pray thee, let us go and find him out,
And quicken his embraced heaviness
With some delight or other.

Salar. Do we so. [*Exeunt.*

Scene IX

Belmont. A room in Portia's house

Enter Nerissa and a Servitor.

Ner. Quick, quick, I pray thee: draw the curtain straight:
The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election presently.

39. *Slubber.* Soil, mar, spoil by haste.
44. *Ostents.* Demonstrations.
3. *Election.* Choice.

Flourish of cornets. Enter the Prince of Arragon, Portia, and their trains.

Por. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince:
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized:
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.
Ar. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage:
Lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.
Por. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.
Ar. And so have I address'd me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold; silver; and base lead.
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
What many men desire! that 'many' may be meant
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,

6. *Nuptial rites.* Wedding ceremonies.
25–6. *Meant by.* Intended to mean.

Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits,
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves':
And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune, and be honourable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.
O, that estates, degrees and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honour
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare!
How many be commanded that command!
How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,
To be new-varnish'd! Well, but to my choice:
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'

28. *Martlet.* House-martin.
37–8. *Go about to cozen.* Attempt to cheat.

I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.
[*He opens the silver casket.*
Por. [*Aside.*] Too long a pause for that which you find there.
Ar. What 's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,
Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
'Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.'
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?
Por. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices,
And of opposed natures.
Ar. What is here?
[*Reads.*] The fire seven times tried this:
Seven times tried that judgment is,
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss:
There be fools alive, I wis,
Silver'd o'er; and so was this.
Take what wife you will to wed,
I will ever be your head:
So be gone: you are sped.

Still more fool I shall appear

61. *To offend, and judge.* It is not for Arragon to criticize the terms or the result.
68. *Wis.* Know.

By the time I linger here:
With one fool's head I came to woo,
But I go away with two.
Sweet, adieu. I 'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.

[*Exeunt Arragon and train.*

Por. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

Ner. The ancient saying is no heresy,
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

Por. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Where is my lady?

Por. Here: what would my lord?

Serv. Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord;
From whom he bringeth sensible regreets,
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love:
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

89. *Sensible regreets.* Tangible greetings, not mere words.
90. *Commends.* Greetings.
94. *Costly.* Full of riches.

Por. No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him,
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.
Ner. Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be! [*Exeunt.*

CLOAK AND HOOD
(II. vi. 51)

ACT THIRD

Scene I

Venice. A street

Enter Salanio and Salarino.

Salan. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salar. Why, yet it lives there unchecked, that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas; the Goodwins, I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of her word.

Salan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapped ginger, or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity, or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio—O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!—

Salar. Come, the full stop.

Salan. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

2. *It lives there unchecked.* The report is not contradicted.
10. *Knapped.* Nibbled, bit in pieces.

Salar. I would it might prove the end of his losses.

Salan. Let me say 'amen' betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter Shylock.

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

Shy. You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

Salar. That 's certain: I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

Salan. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledged; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

Shy. She is damned for it.

Salar. That 's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

Salan. Out upon it, old carrion! rebels it at these years?

Shy. I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood.

Salar. There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

Shy. There I have another bad match: a

bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was used to come so smug upon the mart; let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.

Salar. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh: what 's that good for?

Shy. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what 's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you

teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house, and desires to speak with you both.

Salar. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter Tubal.

Salan. Here comes another of the tribe: a third cannot be matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew.

[*Exeunt Salan., Salar., and Servant.*

Shy. How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa? hast thou found my daughter?

Tub. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

Shy. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now: two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so:—and I know not what 's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no ill luck

stirring but what lights on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding.

Tub. Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I heard in Genoa—

Shy. What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

Tub. Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

Shy. I thank God, I thank God! Is 't true, is 't true?

Tub. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

Shy. I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news! ha, ha! where? in Genoa?

Tub. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats.

Shy. Thou stick'st a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

Tub. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

Shy. I am very glad of it: I 'll plague him; I 'll torture him: I am glad of it.

Tub. One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

Shy. Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.
Shy. Nay, that 's true, that 's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II

Belmont. A room in Portia's house

Enter Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, Nerissa, and Attendants.

Por. I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
There 's something tells me, but it is not love,
I would not lose you; and you know yourself,
Hate counsels not in such a quality.
But lest you should not understand me well—
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought—
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but I am then forsworn;

6. *In such a quality.* To that effect. 'Hate would not prompt me to say "Stay here."'

So will I never be: so may you miss me;
But if you do, you 'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'er-look'd me, and divided me;
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours! O, these naughty times
Put bars between the owners and their rights!
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

Bass. Let me choose;
For as I am, I live upon the rack.

Por. Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.

Bass. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love:
There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

Por. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforced do speak any thing.

Bass. Promise me life, and I 'll confess the truth.

Por. Well then, confess and live.

Bass. 'Confess,' and 'love,'
Had been the very sum of my confession:

15. *O'er-look'd.* Bewitched.
22. *Peize.* Retard, make go slower.
23. *Eke.* Increase.

O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance!
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.
Por. Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them:
If you do love me, you will find me out.
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
Let music sound while he doth make his choice;
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music: that the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream,
And watery death-bed for him. He may win;
And what is music then? Then music is
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
To a new-crowned monarch: such it is
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
With no less presence, but with much more love,
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster: I stand for sacrifice:
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,

44. *Swan-like.* Refers to the old idea that a swan sings just before its death.

56–60. *The virgin . . . sea-monster.* From time to time the Trojans had to sacrifice a maiden to the sea-monster which Poseidon, God of the sea, sent to ravage their country. Hercules saved the king's daughter, on whom the lot once fell. But he stipulated for some famous horses as his reward and did not marry the maiden.

58. *Dardanian.* Trojan.

With bleared visages, come forth to view
The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules!
Live thou, I live: with much much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that makest the fray.

Music, whilst Bassanio comments on the caskets to himself.

SONG

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?
Reply, reply.
It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I 'll begin it—Ding, dong, bell.

All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bass. So may the outward shows be least themselves:
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple, but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:

How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk;
And these assume but valour's excrement
To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it:
So are those crisped snaky golden locks
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposed fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I: joy be the consequence!

Por. [*Aside.*] How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy!
O love, be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;

92. *Crisped.* Curled.

In measure rain thy joy; scant this excess!
I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
For fear I surfeit!

Bass. What find I here?
[*Opening the leaden casket.*
Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider, and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men,
Faster than gnats in cobwebs: but her eyes—
How could he see to do them? having made one,
Methinks it should have power to steal both his
And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance. Here 's the scroll,
The continent and summary of my fortune.
[*Reads.*] You that choose not by the view,
Chance as fair, and choose as true!
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content and seek no new.
If you be well pleased with this,
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is,
And claim her with a loving kiss.

A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave;
I come by note, to give and to receive.
Like one of two contending in a prize,
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no;
So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so;
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

Por. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am: though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet, for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself;
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
More rich;
That only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account; but the full sum of me
Is sum of something, which, to term in gross,
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted: but now I was the lord

Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants, and this same myself,
Are yours, my lord: I give them with this ring;
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love,
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

Bass. Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;
And there is such confusion in my powers,
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleased multitude;
Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:
O, then be bold to say Bassanio 's dead!

Ner. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy: good joy, my lord and lady!

Gra. My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish;
For I am sure you can wish none from me:
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

Bass. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

Gra. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:

You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
You loved, I loved, for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

Por. Is this true, Nerissa?

Ner. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

Bass. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

Gra. Yes, faith, my lord.

Bass. Our feast shall be much honoured in your marriage.

Gra. We 'll play with them the first heir for a thousand ducats.

Ner. What, and stake down?

Gra. No; we shall ne'er win at that sport, and stake down.
But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

Enter Lorenzo, Jessica, and Salerio, a Messenger from Venice.

Bass. Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new interest here

200. *Intermission.* Delay, or neglect of opportunity.
222. *Interest.* Position as future master of Belmont.

Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.
Por. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.
Lor. I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salerio by the way,
He did entreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.
Saler. I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you. [*Gives Bassanio a letter.*
Bass. Ere I ope this letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.
Saler. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there
Will show you his estate.
Gra. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.
Your hand, Salerio: what 's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.
Saler. I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.
Por. There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper,

224. *Very.* True.
242. *Jasons.* See Act I, sc. i, l. 172.
244. *Shrewd.* Bad. The original meaning is 'cursed.'

That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek:
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse!
With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.

Bass. O sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins, I was a gentleman;
And then I told you true: and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?
Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?
From Tripoli, from Mexico, and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary, and India?
And not one vessel scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks?

263. *Mere.* Unmixed, absolute.

Saler. Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear, that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,
He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man:
He plies the Duke at morning and at night;
And doth impeach the freedom of the state,
If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,
The Duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.
Jes. When I was with him I have heard him swear
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him: and I know, my lord,
If law, authority and power deny not,
It will go hard with poor Antonio.
Por. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?
Bass. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies; and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.
Por. What sum owes he the Jew?
Bass. For me three thousand ducats.
Por. What, no more?

282. *Port.* Position.

Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia's side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over:
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer:
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bass. [*Reads.*] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I, if I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure: if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

Por. O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

Bass. Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste: but, till I come again,
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III

Venice. A street

Enter Shylock, Salarino, Antonio, and Jailer.

Shy. Jailer, look to him: tell me not of mercy;
This is the fool that lent out money gratis:
Jailer, look to him.
Ant. Hear me yet, good Shylock.
Shy. I 'll have my bond; speak not against my bond;
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:
The Duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou naughty jailer, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.
Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.
Shy. I 'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:
I 'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I 'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;
I 'll have no speaking: I will have my bond. [*Exit.*
Salar. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.
Ant. Let him alone:
I 'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.

9. *Fond.* Foolish.
18. *Impenetrable.* Impervious to all feeling.
20. *Bootless.* Useless, to no advantage.

He seeks my life; his reason well I know;
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.

Salar. I am sure the Duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

Ant. The Duke cannot deny the course of law:
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of his state;
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go:
These griefs and losses have so bated me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.
Well, jailer, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not!

[*Exeunt.*

26–31. *The Duke . . . all nations.* 'If the advantage of the certainty of impartial justice be denied,' etc. Or else read a colon after 'Venice,' not after 'law.' In that case 'for' means 'because of,' and 'it' means 'the course of law,' and 'commodity' would rather mean 'trade.'

32. *Bated.* Abated, lessened.

Scene IV

Belmont. A room in Portia's house

Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo, Jessica, and Balthasar.

Lor. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit
Of god-like amity; which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
But if you knew to whom you show this honour,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you.
Por. I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now: for in companions
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion
Of lineaments, of manners and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestow'd
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish misery!
This comes too near the praising of myself;

9. *Bounty*. Kindness.

Therefore no more of it: hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry and manage of my house
Until my lord's return: for mine own part,
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord's return:
There is a monastery two miles off;
And there will we abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition;
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.

Lor. Madam, with all my heart;
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

Por. My people do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
And so farewell, till we shall meet again.

Lor. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

Jes. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

Por. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
To wish it back on you: fare you well, Jessica.
[*Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo.*
Now, Balthasar,
As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
And use thou all the endeavour of a man
In speed to Padua: see thou render this

25. *Husbandry.* Stewardship.

Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed
Unto the tranect, to the common ferry
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee.

Balth. Madam, I go with all convenient speed. [*Exit.*

Por. Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
That you yet know not of; we 'll see our husbands
Before they think of us.

Ner. Shall they see us?

Por. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplished
With that we lack. I 'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I 'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with a braver grace,
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
Like a fine bragging youth; and tell quaint lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
I could not do withal: then I 'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them;

52. *Imagined speed.* Either 'all one can imagine' or 'with the speed of thought.'

53. *Tranect.* An otherwise unknown word, supposed to mean a sluice or dam five miles from Venice. Some think it a mistake for 'traject' (Italian *traghetto*=a ferry).

And twenty of these puny lies I 'll tell,
That men shall swear I have discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.
But come, I 'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park-gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day. [*Exeunt.*

Scene V

The same. A garden

Enter Launcelot and Jessica.

Laun. Yes, truly; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children: therefore, I promise ye, I fear you. I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation of the matter: therefore be of good cheer; for, truly, I think you are damned.

Jes. I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

Laun. Truly, the more to blame he: we were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs: if we

77. *Raw.* Compare our use of 'green' for 'inexperienced.'

grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

Enter Lorenzo.

Jes. I 'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say: here he comes.

Lor. I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot, if you thus get my wife into corners.

Jes. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo: Launcelot and I are out. He tells me flatly, there is no mercy for me in heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter: and he says, you are no good member of the commonwealth; for, in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.

Lor. How every fool can play upon the word! I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence; and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

Laun. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

Lor. Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! then bid them prepare dinner.

Laun. That is done too, sir; only 'cover' is the word.

Lor. Will you cover, then, sir?

20. *Are out.* Have fallen out.
31. *Stomachs.* Appetites.
34. *Cover.* Lay the table. 'Put on your hat' as interpreted by Launcelot.

Laun. Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.
Lor. Yet more quarrelling with occasion! Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning: go to thy fellows; bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.
Laun. For the table, sir, it shall be served in; for the meat, sir, it shall be covered; for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and conceits shall govern. [*Exit.*
Lor. O dear discretion, how his words are suited!
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words; and I do know
A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word
Defy the matter. How cheer'st thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?
Jes. Past all expressing. It is very meet
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life;
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;
And if one earth he do not mean it, then
In reason he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match
And on the wager lay two earthly women,

48. *Discretion.* Discrimination.
His words are suited. I.e. they are ill-matched.
53. *Defy.* Disregard.

And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawn'd with the other; for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.

Lor. Even such a husband
Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.

Jes. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

Lor. I will anon: first, let us go to dinner.

Jes. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.

Lor. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk; 71
Then, howsoe'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest it.

Jes. Well, I 'll set you forth. [*Exeunt.*

74. *Set you forth.* Praise you.

ACT FOURTH

Scene I

Venice. A court of justice

Enter the Duke, the Magnificoes, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, Salerio, and others.

Duke. What, is Antonio here?
Ant. Ready, so please your Grace.
Duke. I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.
Ant. I have heard
Your Grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate,
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury; and am arm'd
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.
Duke. Go one, and call the Jew into the court.
Saler. He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

Enter Shylock.

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face.
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,

That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought
Thou 'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh.
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety of the principal;
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
That have of late so huddled on his back,
Enow to press a royal merchant down,
And pluck commiseration of his state
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Shy. I have possess'd your Grace of what I purpose;
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond:
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
You 'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion-flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats: I 'll not answer that:
But, say, it is my humour: is it answer'd?
What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned? What, are you answer'd yet?

20. *Remorse.* Pity.

Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;
And others, when the bag-pipe they do hear,
Cannot contain themselves. Forsooth affectoin,
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer,
As there is no firm reason to be render'd,
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
Why he, a woollen bag-pipe; but of force
Must yield to such inevitable shame
As to offend, himself being offended;
So can I give no reason, nor will I not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

Bass. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

Shy. I am not bound to please thee with my answer.

Bass. Do all men kill the things they do not love?

Shy. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

Bass. Every offence is not a hate at first.

Shy. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

Ant. I pray you, think you question with the Jew:
You may as well go stand upon the beach,

47. *Gaping.* Either a squealing pig, or a pig's head dressed for the table.
50. *Affection.* Feeling produced by things.
51. *Passion.* Impulses of that heart.
56. *Woollen.* Covered with a woollen case.

And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
You may as well use question with the wolf,
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops, and to make no noise,
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do any thing most hard,
As seek to soften that — than which what 's harder?—
His Jewish heart: therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no further means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.

Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

Shy. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

Shy. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules.
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them: shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands? You will answer

77. *Fretten.* Fretted, worried.
92. *Abject.* Low, menial.

'The slaves are ours': so do I answer you:
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?

Duke. Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here to-day.

Saler. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

Bass. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

Ant. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death: the weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me:
You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
Than to live still, and write mine epitaph.

Enter Nerissa, dressed like a lawyer's clerk.

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

Ner. From both, by lord. Bellario greets your Grace.
[*Presenting a letter.*

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

Shy. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

Gra. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,

Thou makest thy knife keen; but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?
Shy. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.
Gra. O, be thou damn'd, inexecrable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accused.
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith,
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit
Govern'd a wolf, who hang'd for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallowed dam,
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
Are wolfish, bloody, starved and ravenous.
Shy. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud:
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.
Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend
A young and learned doctor to our court.
Where is he?
Ner. He attendeth here hard by,
To know your answer, whether you 'll admit him.
Duke. With all my heart. Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.
Clerk. [*Reads.*] Your Grace shall understand that

128. *Inexecrable.* Too bad to be cursed enough.
131. *Pythagoras.* A Greek philosopher of sixth century B.C.

at the receipt of your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant: we turned o'er many books together: he is furnished with my opinion; which, bettered with his own learning — the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend—comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your Grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.

Duke. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

Enter Portia for Balthasar.

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome: take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

Por. I am informed throughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name.
Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.
You stand within his danger, do you not?
Ant. Ay, so he says.
Por. Do you confess the bond?
Ant. I do.
Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.
Shy. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.
Por. The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much

185. *Strain'd.* Constrained, forced.

To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shy. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;
Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority:
To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Por. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:
'Twill be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error, by the same example,
Will rush into the state: it cannot be.

Shy. A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

Por. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

Shy. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

Por. Shylock, there 's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

224. *Daniel.* The allusion is not to the Daniel who was cast into the den of lions, but to the Daniel in 'The Story of Susannah and the Elders,' who convicted the Elders of false judgment on their own evidence. The name was perhaps proverbial for an eminent judge.

Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.
Por. Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful:
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.
Shy. When it is paid according to the tenour.
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment: by my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me: I stay here on my bond.
Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgment.
Por. Why then, thus it is:
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.
Shy. O noble judge! O excellent young man!
Por. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.
Shy. 'Tis very true: O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!
Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.
Shy. Ay, his breast:
So says the bond:—doth it not, noble judge?—
'Nearest his heart': those are the very words.

Por. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh
The flesh?
Shy. I have them ready.
Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.
Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?
Por. It is not so express'd: but what of that?
'Twere good you do so much for charity.
Shy. I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.
Por. You, merchant, have you any thing to say?
Ant. But little: I am arm'd and well prepared.
Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife:
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For, if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I 'll pay it presently with all my heart.
Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself;

But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life:
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

Por. Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

Gra. I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love:
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

Ner. 'Tis well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

Shy. These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter;
Would any of the stock of Barrabas [*Aside.*
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!
We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.

Por. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

Shy. Most rightful judge!

Por. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shy. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!

Por. Tarry a little; there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh':
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

Gra. O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!
Shy. Is that the law?
Por. Thyself shalt see the act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.
Gra. O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!
Shy. I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice,
And let the Christian go.
Bass. Here is the money.
Por. Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty.
Gra. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!
Por. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut'st more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance,
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.
Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.
Por. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.
Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.
Bass. I have it ready for thee; here it is.
Por. He hath refused it in the open court:

332. *Estimation of a hair.* By a hair's difference in weight.
334. *Daniel.* See note on l. 224.

He shall have merely justice and his bond.
Gra. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.
Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?
Por. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.
Shy. Why, then the devil give him good of it!
I 'll stay no longer question.
Por. Tarry, Jew:
The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly, and directly too,
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.
Gra. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself:
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.
Por. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.
Shy. Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:
You take my house, when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life,
When you do take the means whereby I live.
Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?
Gra. A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.
Ant. So please my lord the Duke and all the court
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
I am content; so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter:
Two things provided more, that, for this favour,
He presently become a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.
Duke. He shall do this, or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronounced here.
Por. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

373. *Humbleness may drive unto a fine.* If you humbly beg, we may reduce the sum to a fine.
382. *To quit the fine.* Not exact the fine spoken of by the Duke.
384. *In use.* In trust.

Shy. I am content.
Por. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.
Shy. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well: send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.
Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.
Gra. In christening shalt thou have two godfathers:
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.
[*Exit Shylock.*
Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.
Por. I humbly do desire your Grace of pardon:
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.
Duke. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.
Antonio, gratify this gentleman,
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.
[*Exeunt Duke and his train.*
Bass. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof,
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.
Ant. And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.

403. *Desire your Grace of pardon.* 'Entreat' your Grace 'in respect of' excusing me.
407. *Gratify.* Give him a reward.
413. *Cope.* Put forward as a match for.

Por. He is well paid that is well satisfied;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied,
And therein do account myself well paid:
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me when we meet again:
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.
Bass. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further:
Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,
Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you,
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.
Por. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.
Give me your gloves, I 'll wear them for your sake;
[*To Ant.*
And, for your love, I 'll take this ring from you:
[*To Bass.*
Do not draw back your hand; I 'll take no more;
And you in love shall not deny me this.
Bass. This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle!
I will not shame myself to give you this.
Por. I will have nothing else but only this;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.
Bass. There 's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation:
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.
Por. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers:
You taught me first to beg; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.
Bass. Good sir, the ring was given me by my wife;

432. *To give.* By giving.

And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.
Por. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserved the ring,
She would not hold out enemy for ever,
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!
[*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.*
Ant. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:
Let his deservings and my love withal
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.
Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;
Give him the ring; and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house: away! make haste.
[*Exit Gratiano.*
Come, you and I will thither presently;
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont: come, Antonio. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

The same. A street

Enter Portia and Nerissa.

Por. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed
And let him sign it: we 'll away to-night
And be a day before our husbands home:
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter Gratiano.

Gra. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en:
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.
Por. That cannot be:
His ring I do accept most thankfully:
And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore,
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.
Gra. That will I do.
Ner. Sir, I would speak with you.
I 'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
[*Aside to Portia.*
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.
Por. [*Aside to Ner.*] Thou mayst, I warrant. We shall have old swearing
That they did give the rings away to men;
But we 'll outface them, and outswear them too.
[*Aloud.*] Away! make haste: thou know'st where I will tarry.
Ner. Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?
[*Exeunt.*

15. *Old.* Gives emphasis, as in our phrase 'a high old time.'

ACT FIFTH

SCENE I

Belmont. Avenue to Portia's house

Enter Lorenzo and Jessica.

Lor. The moon shines bright: in such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls,
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.
Jes. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
And ran dismay'd away.
Lor. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand

4. *Troilus.* Troilus was a son of Priam, King of Troy, who loved Cressida, daughter of a Trojan priest. Her father deserted to the enemy, and Cressida became the lover of the Greek hero Diomede.

7. *Thisbe.* In one of Chaucer's tales Thisbe went to meet her lover Pyramus, but fled from a lion. Pyramus found her bloodstained cloak, and thinking her dead, killed himself. Then Thisbe followed his example.

10–12. *Dido.* In his wanderings after the siege of Troy, Aeneas came to Carthage, and fell in love with the queen, Dido, but presently deserted her.

Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.
Jes. In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Aeson.
Lor. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.
Jes. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith
And ne'er a true one.
Lor. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.
Jes. I would out-night you, did no body come;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter Stephano.

Lor. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?
Steph. A friend.
Lor. A friend! what friend? your name, I pray you, friend?
Steph. Stephano is my name; and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont: she doth stray about

11. *Waft.* Waved to.
13–15. *Medea.* Medea was the wife of Jason. She restored his father by injecting a potion of herbs into his veins.

By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.
Lor. Who comes with her?
Steph. None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet return'd?
Lor. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter Launcelot.

Laun. Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!
Lor. Who calls?
Laun. Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo?
Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!
Lor. Leave hollaing, man: here.
Laun. Sola! where? where?
Lor. Here.
Laun. Tell him there 's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news: my master will be here ere morning. [*Exit.*
Lor. Sweet soul, let 's in, and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter: why should we go in?
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air.
[*Exit Stephano.*
How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music

Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There 's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Enter Musicians.

Come, ho, and wake Diana with a hymn!
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music. [*Music.*

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive:
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood;
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze

59. *Patines.* Small flat plates of metal.

60–2. *There 's not . . . cherubins.* A reference to the Greek conception of the music produced by planets moving in their orbits and making 'heavenly harmonies.'

66. *Diana.* The Roman goddess of hunting, but also identified with the moon.

By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter Portia and Nerissa.

Por. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.
Ner. When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.
Por. So doth the greater glory dim the less:
A substitute shines brightly as a king,
Until a king be by; and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!
Ner. It is your music, madam, of the house.
Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect:
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

80. *Orpheus.* The famous musician of Greek legend, who was given Apollo's lyre, and taught its use by the Muses. Even the rocks on Olympus were said to follow his music.

87. *Erebus.* The region of utter darkness between Earth and Hades.

99. *Respect.* Connection with other circumstances that give them a special flavour.

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.
Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,
When neither is attended; and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise and true perfection!
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion,
And would not be awaked. [*Music ceases.*
Lor. That is the voice,
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.
Por. He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
By the bad voice.
Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.
Por. We have been praying for our husbands' healths,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they return'd?
Lor. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.
Por. Go in, Nerissa;
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence;
Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you.
[*A tucket sounds.*

109. *Endymion.* The male 'sleeping beauty' of Greek mythology. The moon-goddess came and kissed him as he lay asleep.

Lor. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:
We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.
Por. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
It looks a little paler: 'tis a day,
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano and their followers.

Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,
If you would walk in absence of the sun.
Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me:
But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.
Bass. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
This is the man, this is Antonio,
To who I am so infinitely bound.
Por. You should in all sense be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.
Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.
Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.
Gra. [*To Nerissa.*] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk:
Would he were dead that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much to heart.

Lor. A quarrel, ho, already! what 's the matter?
Gra. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not.'
Ner. What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death,
And that it should lie with you in your grave:
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective, and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God 's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on 's face that had it.
Gra. He will, an if he live to be a man.
Ner. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.
Gra. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,
No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,
A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:
I could not for my heart deny it him.
Por. You were to blame, I must be plain with you
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring and made him swear
Never to part with it; and here he stands;
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it.
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,

148. *Posy.* A motto or rhyme (poesy) inscribed inside a ring.

You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief:
An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.
Bass. [*Aside.*] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off,
And swear I lost the ring defending it.
Gra. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begg'd it, and indeed
Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.
Por. What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.
Bass. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it, it is gone.
Por. Even so void is your false heart of truth.
By heaven, I will never be your wife
Until I see the ring.
Ner. Nor I be yours
Till I again see mine.
Bass. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive for what I gave the ring,
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.
Por. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,

Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I 'll die for 't but some woman had the ring.

Bass. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me,
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him,
And suffer'd him to go displeased away;
Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him;
I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blessed candles of the night,
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Por. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house:
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
And that which you did swear to keep for me,
I will become as liberal as you;
I 'll not deny him anything I have.

Ner. And I his clerk; therefore be well advised
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

206. *Ceremony.* A sacred thing.

Gra. Well, do you so, let me not take him, then;
For if I do, I 'll mar the young clerk's pen.
Ant. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.
Por. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.
Bass. Portia, forgive me this enforced wrongs
And, in the hearing of these many friends,
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself—
Por. Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;
In each eye, one: swear by your double self,
And there 's an oath of credit.
Bass. Nay, but hear me:
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.
Ant. I once did lend my body for his wealth;
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.
Por. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this,
And bid him keep it better than the other.
Ant. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.
Bass. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!
Por. I had it of him: pardon me, Bassanio.
Ner. And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano;
For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk,
Did give me this.

Por. You 're all amazed:
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario:
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk: Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,
And even but now return'd; I have not yet
Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly:
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chanced on this letter.
Ant. I am dumb.
Bass. Were you the doctor and I knew you not?
Gra. Were you the clerk and yet I knew you not?
Ant. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.
Por. How now, Lorenzo!
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.
Ner. Ay, and I 'll give them him without a fee.
There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.
Lor. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starved people.
Por. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied

Of these events at full. Let us go in;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories.
And we will answer all things faithfully.
Gra. Well, while I live I 'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [*Exeunt.*

283. *Charge us there upon inter'gatories.* Make us give faithful answers to your questions.

VENETIAN GONDOLA

THE STORIES OF THE PLAY

THE question may naturally be asked, 'Did Shakespeare create the whole play, stories and characters and incidents, or was there any source in fact or fiction for it, or for parts of it?' As in so many other cases, Shakespeare borrowed much, adapted and moulded as his genius prompted, and as a result produced something original.

The Bond-story is one of those stories which are of untold antiquity, and unknown origin, appearing in many lands and many guises. Possibly it came to Europe from the East, perhaps with returning Crusaders. Certainly there is an English translation in the late thirteenth century, and it appears in Italy in a collection of stories written in 1378, the *Il Pecorone* of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino. The baffling of a cruel Jew of his bond is the common feature, though in some versions it is a Judge who succeeds, in another the Pope, and in yet another the Sultan of Turkey.

No Elizabethan translation of *Il Pecorone* into English has been discovered, but the resemblances between its version and the story and that in *The Merchant of Venice* are so close that it is supposed Shakespeare must have read one. For in that tale

not only is the scene laid in Venice but the lady (not this time a man) who outwits the Jew, lives at 'Belmonte,' comes to Venice disguised as a lawyer, saves the merchant (Ansaldo) after letting the Jew think he will win his case, refuses money and obtains her husband's ring for her services, and finally her husband's friend (though here the merchant himself) marries her maid. Therefore we may safely assume that in the Bond-story Shakespeare was using a story already in existence, and, indeed, this particular version of it.

The other most striking plot may be called the Caskets-story; that too is an old one. It is contained in a collection of stories made in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, known as the *Gesta Romanorum* (Deeds of the Romans), but actually containing legends of many countries and of the East. But the story is far older, a Greek version of the ninth century being known; and there are others. In all these it is a king or emperor who causes someone to choose. In the *Gesta Romanorum* he makes the lady whom his son is to marry choose; but the inscriptions on the caskets are almost identical with those in the play. On the golden casket, for instance, was inscribed:

> Whoso chooseth me shall find that [which] he deserveth.

There are various other possible or probable sources from which Shakespeare may have drawn—for example, a lost play about a Jew, 'representing

the greedinesse of worldly chusers, and bloody minds of usurers,' and an old ballad called, 'A new Song, showing the crueltie of Gernutus, a Jew, who in lending to a merchant an hundred crowns, would have a pound of his fleshe, because he could not pay him at the time appointed.' Again, Shakespeare must have been well acquainted with Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, written about 1590, though there is here no suggestion of borrowing; and there is an Italian story which Shakespeare may have known, with some remarkable points of similarity to the Lorenzo-Jessica love-story.

But, when all this is said, what does it amount to? That Shakespeare took the framework, and in one or two cases details, from more or less well-known tales. That is all. From these he created a play with numerous characters, real living persons of thought, action and emotion, who never existed before. They come before us in all sorts of situations, exhibiting their souls to each other and to us, in language often reaching the topmost heights of eloquence and beauty. And that is what makes the play a great drama, great in human thought and great in literary art and value.

SOME OF THE CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

Shylock. Of all the characters in the play Shylock is obviously the most detestable, but also the most pitiable. Had we seen a production by Burbage's company at the 'Globe' we should have thought him even more comical than detestable, and 'pitiable' would hardly have occurred to us. The fact is worth thinking over. For more than three hundred years Jews had been forbidden by law to reside in England, and the law of Edward I was not repealed until 1657. True, a few came to England in the sixteenth century, and a year or two before the *Merchant of Venice* was produced in London, a great sensation had been provided by the attempt of a Jewish doctor [1] to poison Queen Elizabeth. But in general English people had no chance of knowing Jews except by repute, and that repute was wholly bad; they were hated for their religion, despised for their race, and scorned for their moneylending; their good qualities were unknown or unappreciated. Yet is it not a fact, however astonishing, that Shakespeare created in his Shylock a character which, while

[1] This was Dr Roderigo Lopez, the queen's Jewish physician, who was executed on the 7th June 1594, on a charge of being bribed by the King of Spain to poison Elizabeth. The queen seems to have had very strong doubts as to Lopez's alleged guilt, but his enemies were evidently determined to get rid of him. It is interesting to note that he was a red-bearded man, and Shylock's traditional red beard may have been suggested by this fact.

portraying all the supposed evil traits of a Jew, and thus satisfying the popular taste and ideas of his time, still left him essentially human and not monstrous? If we put ourselves in the position of an ordinary Englishman of the sixteenth or seventeenth century with his insular tastes and prejudices and religious ideas, can we not understand the earlier view of Shylock? And yet do not we, who are so familiar with the genius of the Jewish race, and with the evils wrought by the cruel domination of one race over another, find other emotions stirring in us besides scorn and hatred and amusement, and do not we sympathize with Shylock and his attitude? If Shakespeare had really visited Venice, as some suppose, may he not well have been moved by the condition of the Jews there, and in sheer greatness of heart have found it impossible to produce a mere traditional being instead of the reality? Jessica's charm in itself almost challenges race-hatred, although at the same time her runaway match with a Christian is the bitterest pill to Shylock. A modern parallel is hard to find. Perhaps the spectacle of a disappointed and bitterly fanatical patriotic atheistical German professor being confronted with the marriage of his charming daughter to a wealthy young English Catholic aristocrat and good sportsman might provide a dramatist with similar opportunities for playing on the weaknesses, tastes, and prejudices of his audience.

Shylock is commonly supposed to be aged and

cringing, but 'old' as used in the play does not necessarily mean much more than the present familiar sense of the word, and some actors have interpreted his character as rather proud and defiant than cringing. If the reader can find any instance of a man whose whole being has been warped by a wrong and a desire for revenge, he will find himself viewing Shylock very differently from what he will if he keeps his eye merely on the cruelty and desire for revenge which now dominate him.

Antonio. It is clear throughout the play that something has happened to Antonio which has altered him in some respects: lightheartedness and enjoyment of life have left him. The merchant himself did not know the cause of his melancholy, or at least refused to admit that he did. Was it mere temperament? But his friends said he was unlike himself. Was it fear of losing the love of his dearest friend, Bassanio, like a mother who dreads her daughter's transference of her greatest love to the man she is to marry? That is the most interesting question in the character of Antonio. For us his contemptuous attitude to Shylock can hardly fail to detract from his worth; but there is no suggestion that anybody in the play, or any one in the audience, could take such a view. He is shown as the kindly, courteous, and generous Christian whose very noble qualities put him at the mercy of the cruel, scheming Jew, and his terms to Shylock after the trial are regarded as generous.

If we are going to make allowances for Shylock, must we not do the same for Antonio, and consider his devotion to Bassanio, his calmness in face of disaster and courage in face of death as justifying the opinion his friends had of his worth?

Gratiano. Gratiano brings life and force into the play as no one else does. His gaiety is infectious, and his high spirits, simple directness, and honourable intentions never falter. True, his tongue runs away with him, but it is never malicious, even when he gloats over Shylock's discomfiture. Sometimes indeed there seems little in him of much worth, but the very speech which he prefaces with 'Let me play the fool' may suggest that he only played the part, and does not his amusing promise of sedate behaviour if he is allowed to accompany Bassanio support the idea? He and Nerissa make an admirable pair in every way, and we hardly find ourselves prepared to criticize the suddenness of their betrothal, or to ask for any such love-scenes as those between the other lovers.

Portia. Portia must share with Shylock the position of character of greatest interest, and she is as delightful and attractive as the Jew is unpleasing and repulsive. She is beautiful and rich, witty and quick-witted, kind and sympathetic, modest but courageous—in short she has all the virtues and no vices. Which is as much as to say that she is a typical heroine. But at the same time Portia is a distinct character, and whether she is mostly a stage

heroine intended to satisfy the popular taste but saved by Shakespeare from being merely that; or whether she is a charming character study of a noble lady written up to suit a theatre-going audience, should be thought over. Seeing that the main incidents are no more original in her case than in Shylock's, the former appears more likely. Since she is reputed beautiful, Shakespeare will make us realize her beauty in words to match; since she is virtuous, we shall see her goodness at work; since she is gracious, her grace shall charm us. Typical heroine of romance as she must be, she is nevertheless just a woman, and a lady to love and serve.

That at all events is apparently what Shakespeare intended his audience to see and feel. But when Hazlitt wrote on the play he dismissed Portia almost in a line: 'Portia is not a very great favourite with us,' and objected to 'a certain degree of affectation and pedantry about her, which is very unusual in Shakespeare's women,' but he adds, 'which perhaps was a proper qualification for the office of a "civil doctor," which she undertakes and executes so successfully.'

Nerissa. The maid suggests the familiar saying, 'Like master, like man,' for in many ways she reflects the influence of Portia. Yet there is no attempt to suggest that she is anything but a lady's-maid. The nobility and high qualities of Portia are lacking, and her love affair with Gratiano is just a happy incident in the play.

Lorenzo. This young nobleman is of little interest or importance except to provide Jessica with a Christian husband.

Jessica. The Jew's daughter deserves more attention. In the main she is a foil to her father, though more than once she shows some affinity. But

> She 's an enchanting little Israelite,
> A world of hidden dimples, (HENLEY)

and helps to provide not only the final humiliation of her father, but one of the most beautiful scenes of happy lovers in all Shakespeare. This may reasonably lead us to ask, did Shakespeare wish to emphasize the bad character of her father, or did he wish to show that a Jewess might be charming and lovable, full of the same feelings as any other woman?

Launcelot Gobbo. Launcelot is clearly the clown of the play. Is he anything more? Probably not, for excepting in his attempt to decide between conscience and the fiend he utters no words of wisdom, and nowhere plays any significant part in the play, unless the carrying of the love-letter is reckoned as such. He is not the real jester of the drama, for that part is more nearly approached by Gratiano.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Of all the great names of this earth, none is more certain of immortality than that of Shakespeare.—GEO. BRANDES.

AMONGST those who have come to take a permanent place amongst the greatest in human history there can be few of whom so little is known that helps us to understand the man himself as in the case of William Shakespeare, without a doubt the greatest writer in English. In outline his life is known, thanks to an immense amount of research by scholars of many countries; to this sure basis of known fact may be added much that is very probable; but when all is told a great deal remains puzzling and tantalizing to any one who wishes to understand how such amazing works of genius could be conceived and executed by him.

Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon, and an entry in the parish register records his baptism on 26th April 1564. His father was John Shakespeare, who had married Mary Arden in 1557, and William was their third child. John Shakespeare was a prominent burgess, a yeoman of some wealth (mainly acquired in the wool trade), an alderman, and, four years after the birth of the poet, High Bailiff of the town. Neither John Shakespeare nor his wife seems to have been able to write, but William went to the Free Grammar School at Stratford, and no doubt spent most of his schooldays learning Latin. Of

what he did and saw as a boy we can only guess, but it is safe to assume that he saw some of the plays produced in considerable numbers at that time at Stratford by bands of travelling actors. The next certain incident is his marriage at the age of eighteen to Ann Hathaway, a woman of twenty-six—a false step which can have brought him little happiness in his life, and which cannot have brought him any of the inspiration for the love scenes with which his works abound.

Two years later he left Stratford for London. There seems little reason to doubt that he was concerned in a poaching escapade in the grounds of a neighbouring landowner, Sir Thomas Lucy, and though he was not liable to imprisonment his position in Stratford may well have been unpleasant. Besides, his father had fallen on evil days, chiefly through disastrous lawsuits, and dared not even attend church or meetings in the town for fear of arrest. Perhaps the chief motive for William Shakespeare's removal to London was simply that of ambition and the desire for a sphere in which his genius might find scope. However it may have been, in 1585 he set out for London, doubtless on horseback, and took such work as he could find at James Burbage's theatre, the first playhouse erected in London, about ten years before. Exactly what he did there is uncertain excepting that he began in some menial capacity, perhaps as a tender of horses of those who visited the theatre, perhaps as a kind of attendant on the actors.

At all events he was connected with the stage, and presently became an actor. Now all companies of actors were at this period legally bound to be in the service of some nobleman, and Shakespeare wore a cloak of the Earl of Leicester, with his arms upon it. The theatre in Shakespeare's time was associated with much that was noisy and disreputable in London life, and the drama was not regarded as literature; yet through his work Shakespeare undoubtedly came in contact with the men of letters of the day, and gained the acquaintance of many of its patrons and the leaders of fashion. Still for six years we have no definite knowledge of him; at the same time it is certain that in addition to acting he collaborated in following the current practice of touching up and re-adapting for the stage several plays, among them some which are usually included in his collected plays, such as *Titus Andronicus*. Of what he did in the months when the Spanish Armada threatened England and was destroyed we know nothing. But a year or two later he published *Venus and Adonis*, a long love-poem, dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. This and one other poem are the only works he himself ever published. About the same time he wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Then a fearful epidemic of plague broke out in London, and all the theatres and playhouses, and much else, were closed. What Shakespeare did at this time we cannot say, but some think that if he ever travelled abroad, it must have been then. Others,

however, hold that there is plenty of time in the preceding six years for some considerable travel in foreign parts, for gaining knowledge of the sea, of the French language, of high life, and in particular many believe that his knowledge of Italy is so intimate that he must have visited it, and have known Venice at first hand. But since it is difficult to understand his knowledge of law, and yet impossible to suppose he was ever a lawyer; or his knowledge of science and nature, and yet impossible for him ever to have studied either; or of court life, yet he was never a courtier; so his genius may have taken the place of actual acquaintance with any foreign land. In any case such travel could only have been a brief interlude in the life of the actor-playwright.

Year after year Shakespeare went on with this life, somehow managing to produce on an average about two plays a year, and amassing a good deal of money in course of time. He became one of the chief actors in Burbage's company, performing at the new Globe Theatre from its opening in 1599, playing frequently at the court of Queen Elizabeth; and after 1604 the company became 'His Majesty's Servants' and wore the arms of James I. We know that he played the Ghost in *Hamlet*, but little else for certain. His facility in writing called forth censure from his admiring fellow-dramatist Ben Jonson, who applied to him a saying of the Roman emperor Augustus, 'sufflaminandus erat' (he ought

to have had the brake put on). How he found time to write so much must, however, remain a mystery, but we must remember that, for good or evil, he spent none in preparing his books for the press.

Whether Shakespeare spent all his time in London or not we do not know, but his heart seems to have been in Stratford, and his mind largely concerned with his family's position. Already in 1595 he was endeavouring to obtain for his father the title of *gentleman* by means of a coat of arms, and managed to do so in 1599. Between these two dates he bought a mansion, New Place, 'at one time the handsomest house in Stratford,' and appears on the register in a year of famine as the holder and owner of the third largest stock of corn and malt in the town. Much else reveals him as a strict and keen man of business. Some business transaction remains on record for almost each year until his retirement in 1612.

Through what experiences he passed in these years we can only guess from his plays; no diary survives, no letter; and little else. The great collection of his sonnets must be largely personal revelation, but what woman inspired them we shall never know. It is the same with the grim shadow that fell on his life and caused the period of gloom in which he wrote his greatest tragedies, *Othello* and *Lear* and *Hamlet*; what brought some measure of peace again and led to his last works, *The Tempest* and *A Winter's Tale*, also remains a secret.

Suddenly and completely Shakespeare broke away

from the life he had lived in London for nearly thirty years, gave up his acting, wrote nothing more, took no steps to publish his plays or even to prepare corrected copies of them, and lived for the last four years of his life in his mansion at Stratford. How he found married life with the wife he had left so long before does not matter; his son had died in early boyhood, and one of his daughters was married. He spent his time now as a wealthy gentleman, but he never held any public office in the town; almost certainly he was barred from the best society; his elder daughter was a strict Puritan; his younger, illiterate; it was probably in his spacious gardens that he spent his happiest hours.

Only two incidents mark these concluding years. Shakespeare took a leading and successful part in preventing the enclosure of the common land of Old Stratford and Welcombe; and a few months before his death his younger daughter Judith married a tavern-keeper and vintner of the town.

In March 1616 Shakespeare drew up his will, which is still in existence and bears his signature. By it he made Susanna his chief heiress, and her daughter received his silver plate. Judith, the poor of Stratford, and three actors, his 'comrades,' also received bequests. But his wife, omitted altogether at first, by an insertion received his 'second best bed with the furniture.'

There is no mention of his writings, or any provision or their publication. A month later, on 23rd April

1616, Shakespeare died, and was buried in the parish church, where a few years later his family erected a monument to his memory.

So ended, within ten days of the author of *Don Quixote*, at the same age as Napoleon, the great genius whose life seems so little, whose enduring work is so immeasurably great. In his own town, and largely in his own lifetime, that greatness was unrecognized. No biography appeared till long afterwards; tradition grew round his name; and when his friends—a group of actors and writers—published the famous 'First Folio' in 1623 it was full of errors. But time, research, and endless criticism have placed him in a position second to none among the great of all time, as his epitaph records, 'a Nestor for judgment, a Socrates for genius, a Virgil for art.'

THE WORKMANSHIP OF THE PLAY

WHILE it is true that Shakespeare's plays are primarily plays for the stage rather than the study, they are nevertheless composed with unique mastery and skill in the art of literature. They should be studied carefully from many points of view if their full greatness is to be appreciated. In some respects a comparison with a cathedral is helpful. The first purpose of a cathedral is to form the centre of religion

for a large district. But to be worthy of such a high calling it must be well planned, well built, of suitable material, and beautified by skilful ornament. The more we know of styles of architecture, of mechanics and engineering, of stone and wood and glass, of sculpture and design, whether in history or practice, the more we shall appreciate the cathedral. And the more we understand of the corresponding branches of language the more we shall appreciate such a play as the *Merchant of Venice.*

The Metre of the Play

Though there are a few prose passages, and a few rhymed lines, the play as a whole is written in *blank verse.* If any ten lines are selected at random the great majority will be found to have ten syllables, with five accents falling regularly on the even numbers 2, 4, 6, 8, 10. Thus:

> A gólden mínd stoops nót to shóws of dróss.
> The quálitý of mércy ís not stráined.
> Wherein doth sít the dréad and féar of kíngs.

The group of syllables containing one accent is called a *foot.*

But it will be readily understood that if every line were exactly the same the result would be monotonous, and it would be almost as difficult to avoid a 'sing-song' effect as it is in 'Four-and-twenty blackbirds.'

Shakespeare saw this, as Marlowe had done, and he accordingly developed the practice of varying the metre far more than had been customary. Therefore lines must not be read mechanically, but at the same time they must not be read as mere prose. The five stressed syllables may not be all on the even numbers, nor need they be equally strong, but they must be accounted for. The following are common variations:

(*a*) *Weak stresses.*

In Bél |mont is |a lád |y rích |ly léft.

Clearly *is* cannot be rightly stressed as forcibly as *Bel-*, but it cannot be passed over as we should read 'There is a lady.'

(*b*) *Inverted stresses.*

Téll me |what tít |le thóu |dost béar. |

The accent falls on the first syllable, and this is very common, particularly after a pause.

(*c*) *Extra syllables.*

Good ,sír, |this ríng |was gív |en me bý |my wífe.
That Í |should néi |ther séll |nor gíve |nor lóse it.

In the first instance *-en* is a very weak syllable, but in the second there is no doubt that *it* is an extra syllable.

(*d*) *Slurred syllables.*

But whó |comes hére? |Lorénzo |and his ín |fidél?

(*e*) *Fewer or more syllables.*

If a long pause, perhaps filled up by some action,

occurs, a foot may be missing altogether. Such a pause occurs when Bassanio opens the casket:

Portia. I féel too múch thy bléssing: máke it léss
For féar I súrfeit.
Bassanio. What find I hére?

The longer line is rare, but we have:

A thóusand times more fáir, ten thóusand times more rích.

In addition to the foregoing notes, the fact that some words have not now the same pronunciation as in Shakespeare's day accounts for some apparent difficulties. In these cases it will be best to give the Shakespearian pronunciation, awkward as the result sometimes is. (Examples may be found in *o-pín-i-ón*, *oc-cás-i-ón*, which must be treated as four-syllabled and two-accented.)

The Language of the Play

There are naturally a great many words in the play which are now no longer in use, or which have changed their meanings. These have as far as possible been explained in the notes, but no account of their origin or history has been attempted; interesting though the subject is, it lies in the domain of grammar rather than literature, and the reader must consult either an etymological dictionary or a Shakespeare glossary if he wishes to pursue the study.

But besides this he should notice, running all

through the play, the difference in manner of framing thoughts, the different forms of tenses, the numerous expressions which, while surviving in occasional use, are no longer common. Amongst many such may be noted for instance, the past tense, as in

> When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
> And they did make no noise;

or the changed place of the auxiliary verb, as in

> And in the morning early will we both
> Fly towards Belmont.

Again we find the ordinary present tense, and the form with *do* used in the reverse of present usage, as in

> He shall do this, or else I do recant.

and

> I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.

It will be easy, too, to see how much more frequently the subjunctive mood was used then than now:

> Be it but so much.
> If it be proved against an alien.

The use of *thee* and *thou* scarcely needs comment.

The Poetry of the Play

There are few more profitable exercises than to look over the play again and find the best examples of certain features, such as beautiful thoughts, beautiful

language, magnificent sounding lines, pathos, humour, or terrible thoughts. The number will prove immense, and one is sure to be struck with the 'grand style' that seems to clothe almost every utterance with something great, and yet this is achieved without making one feel that it is done with effort or artificiality. Sometimes the words are simple enough; one wonders how it comes to be so beautiful.

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank

is as beautiful as any line in the play, though composed of quite ordinary words, while

Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins

is almost equally fine, though it contains three very strange words.

PASSAGES TO LEARN

APART from Scenes or Acts which may be learned for acting, there are many fine passages which should be memorized so far as time permits.

The following selection is suggested:

Act III, sc. i, ll. 57–79.

To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge.

Act III, sc. ii, ll. 40–62.

Away then! I am locked in one of them.

Act III, sc. ii, ll. 74–107.

The world is still deceived with ornament.

Act III, sc. ii, ll. 149–75.

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand.

Act IV, sc. i, ll. 70–83.

I pray you, think you question with the Jew.

Act IV, sc. i, ll. 185–206.

The quality of mercy is not strain'd.

The following list contains passages hardly so notable as those in the first list, but well worth learning:

Act I, sc. i, ll. 79–99.

Let me play the fool.

Act I, sc. iii, ll. 99–122.

Signior Antonio, many a time and oft.

Act II, sc. vii, ll. 13–60.

Some god direct my judgment!

Act II, sc. ix, ll. 19–52.

Fortune now to my heart's hope!

Act IV, sc. i, ll. 265–82.

I am arm'd and well prepared.

Act V, sc. i, ll. 54–65.

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!

Act V, sc. i, ll. 70–88.

The reason is, your spirits are attentive.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

By William Hazlitt

This is a play that in spite of the change of manners and prejudices still holds undisputed possession of the stage. Shakespeare's malignant has outlived Mr Cumberland's benevolent Jew. In proportion as Shylock has ceased to be a popular bugbear, 'baited with the rabble's curse,' he becomes a half-favourite with the philosophical part of the audience, who are disposed to think that Jewish revenge is at least as good as Christian injuries. Shylock is *a good hater*; 'a man no less sinned against than sinning.' If he carries his revenge too far, yet he has strong grounds for 'the lodged hate he bears Anthonio,' which he explains with equal force of eloquence and reason. He seems the depositary of the vengeance of his race; and though the long habit of brooding over daily insults and injuries has crusted over his temper with inveterate misanthropy, and hardened him against the contempt of mankind, this adds but little to the triumphant pretensions of his enemies. There is a strong, quick, and deep sense of justice mixed up with the gall and bitterness of his resentment. The constant apprehension of being burnt alive, plundered, banished, reviled, and trampled on, might be supposed to sour the most forbearing nature and to

take something from that 'milk of human kindness,' with which his persecutors contemplated his indignities. The desire of revenge is almost inseparable from the sense of wrong; and we can hardly help sympathizing with the proud spirit, hid beneath his 'Jewish gaberdine,' stung to madness by repeated undeserved provocations, and labouring to throw off the load of obloquy and oppression heaped upon him and all his tribe by one desperate act of 'lawful' revenge, till the ferociousness of the means by which he is to execute his purpose, and the pertinacity with which he adheres to it, turn us against him; but even at last, when disappointed of the sanguinary revenge with which he had glutted his hopes, and exposed to beggary and contempt by the letter of the law on which he had insisted with so little remorse, we pity him, and think him hardly dealt with by his judges. In all his answers and retorts upon his adversaries, he has the best not only of the argument but of the question, reasoning on their own principles and practice. They are so far from allowing of any measure of equal dealing, of common justice or humanity between themselves and the Jew, that even when they come to ask a favour of him, and Shylock reminds them that 'on such a day they spit upon him, another spurned him, another called him dog, and for these curtesies request he 'll lend them so much monies'—Anthonio, his old enemy, instead of any acknowledgment of the shrewdness and justice of his remonstrance,

which would have been preposterous in a respectable Catholic merchant in those times, threatens him with a repetition of the same treatment:

> I am as like to call thee so again
> To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.

After this, the appeal to the Jew's mercy, as if there were any common principle of right and wrong between them, is the rankest hypocrisy, or the blindest prejudice; and the Jew's answer to one of Anthonio's friends, who asks him what his pound of forfeit flesh is good for, is irresistible:

> To bait fish withal; if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgrac'd me, and hinder'd me of half a million, laughed at my losses, mock'd at my gains, scorn'd my nation, thwarted my bargains, cool'd my friends, heated mine enemies; and what 's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes; hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer that a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

The whole of the trial-scene, both before and after the entrance of Portia, is a masterpiece of dramatic skill. The legal acuteness, the passionate

declamations, the sound maxims of jurisprudence, the wit and irony interspersed in it, the fluctuations of hope and fear in the different persons, and the completeness and suddenness of the catastrophe, cannot be surpassed. Shylock, who is his own counsel, defends himself well, and is triumphant on all the general topics that are urged against him, and only fails through a legal flaw. Take the following as an instance:

Shylock. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchas'd slave,
Which like your asses, and your dogs, and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish part,
Because you bought them:—shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burdens? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands? you will answer,
The slaves are ours:—so do I answer you:
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought, is mine, and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice;
I stand for judgment; answer; shall I have it?

The keenness of his revenge awakes all his faculties; and he beats back all opposition to his purpose, whether grave or gay, whether of wit or argument, with an equal degree of earnestness and self-possession. His character is displayed as distinctly in other less prominent parts of the play, and we may collect from a few sentences the history of his life —his descent and origin, his thrift and domestic

economy, his affection for his daughter, whom he loves next to his wealth, his courtship and his first present to Leah, his wife! 'I would not have parted with it' (the ring which he first gave her) 'for a wilderness of monkies!' What a fine Hebraism is implied in this expression!

Portia is not a very great favourite with us; neither are we in love with her maid, Nerissa. Portia has a certain degree of affectation and pedantry about her, which is very unusual in Shakespeare's women, but which perhaps was a proper qualification for the office of a 'civil doctor,' which she undertakes and executes so successfully. The speech about Mercy is very well; but there are a thousand finer ones in Shakespeare. We do not admire the scene of the caskets: and object entirely to the Black Prince, Morocchius. We should like Jessica better if she had not deceived and robbed her father, and Lorenzo, if he had not married a Jewess, though he thinks he has a right to wrong a Jew. The dialogue between this newly-married couple by moonlight, beginning 'On such a night,' etc., is a collection of classical elegancies. Launcelot, the Jew's man, is an honest fellow. The dilemma in which he describes himself placed between his 'conscience and the fiend,' the one of which advises him to run away from his master's service and the other to stay in it, is exquisitely humorous.

Gratiano is a very admirable subordinate character. He is the jester of the piece: yet one speech

of his, in his own defence, contains a whole volume of wisdom.

Anthonio. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano
A stage, where every one must play his part;
And mine a sad one.
Gratiano. Let me play the fool;
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;
And let my liver rather heat with wine,
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes? and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Anthonio—
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks;—
There are a sort of men, whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond:
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be drest in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;
As who should say, *I am Sir Oracle,*
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!
O, my Anthonio, I do know of these,
That therefore only are reputed wise,
For saying nothing; who, I am very sure,
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
Which hearing them, would call their brothers, fools.
I 'll tell thee more of this another time:
But fish not with this melancholy bait,
For this fool's gudgeon, this opinion.

Gratiano's speech on the philosophy of love, and the effect of habit in taking off the force of passion, is as full of spirit and good sense. The graceful winding up of this play in the fifth act, after the tragic business is dispatched, is one of the happiest instances of Shakespeare's knowledge of the principles of the drama. We do not mean the pretended

quarrel between Portia and Nerissa and their husbands about the rings, which is amusing enough, but the conversation just before and after the return of Portia to her own house, beginning 'How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank,' and ending 'Peace! how the moon sleeps with Endymion, and would not be awaked.' There is a number of beautiful thoughts crowded into that short space, and linked together by the most natural transitions.

When we first went to see Mr Kean in Shylock, we expected to see, what we had been used to see, a decrepit old man, bent with age and ugly with mental deformity, grinning with deadly malice, with the venom of his heart congealed in the expression of his countenance, sullen, morose, gloomy, inflexible, brooding over one idea, that of his hatred, and fixed on one unalterable purpose, that of his revenge. We were disappointed, because we had taken our idea from other actors, not from the play. There is no proof there that Shylock is old, but a single line, 'Anthonio and *old* Shylock, both stand forth'—which does not imply that he is infirm with age —and the circumstance that he has a daughter marriageable, which does not imply that he is old at all. It would be too much to say that his body should be made crooked and deformed to answer to his mind, which is bowed down and warped with prejudices and passion. That he has but one idea, is not true; he has more ideas than any other person in the piece; and if he is intense and

inveterate in the pursuit of his purpose, he shows the utmost elasticity, vigour, and presence of mind, in the means of attaining it. But so rooted was our habitual impression of the part from seeing it caricatured in the representation, that it was only from a careful perusal of the play itself that we saw our error. The stage is not in general the best place to study our author's characters in. It is too often filled with traditional commonplace conceptions of the part, handed down from sire to son, and suited to the taste of *the great vulgar and the small*.—'Tis an unweeded garden: things rank and gross do merely gender in it!' If a man of genius comes once in an age to clear away the rubbish, to make it fruitful and wholesome, they cry, 'Tis a bad school: it may be like nature, it may be like Shakespeare, but it is not like us.' Admirable critics!

SHAKESPEARE

By William Hazlitt

The striking peculiarity of Shakespeare's mind was its generic quality, its power of communication with all other minds—so that it contained a universe of thought and feeling within itself, and had no one peculiar bias, or exclusive excellence more than another. He was just like any other man, but that he was like all other men. He was the least of an egotist that it was possible to be. He was nothing in himself; but he was all that others were, or that they could become. He not only had in himself the germs of every faculty and feeling, but he could follow them by anticipation, intuitively, into all their conceivable ramifications, through every change of fortune or conflict of passion, or turn of thought. He had 'a mind reflecting ages past,' and present:—all the people that ever lived are there. There was no respect of persons with him. His genius shone equally on the evil and on the good, on the wise and the foolish, the monarch and the beggar: 'All corners of the earth, kings, queens, and states, maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave,' are hardly hid from his searching glance. He was like the genius of humanity, changing places with all of us at pleasure, and playing with our purposes as with his

own. He turned the globe round for his amusement, and surveyed the generations of men, and the individuals as they passed, with their different concerns, passions, follies, vices, virtues, actions, and motives —as well those that they knew, as those which they did not know, or acknowledge to themselves. The dreams of childhood, the ravings of despair, were the toys of his fancy. Airy beings waited at his call, and came at his bidding. Harmless fairies 'nodded to him, and did him curtesies': and the night-hag bestrode the blast at the command of 'his so potent art.' The world of spirits lay open to him, like the world of real men and women: and there is the same truth in his delineations of the one as of the other; for if the preternatural characters he describes could be supposed to exist, they would speak, and feel, and act, as he makes them. He had only to think of any thing in order to become that thing, with all the circumstances belonging to it. When he conceived of a character, whether real or imaginary, he not only entered into all its thoughts and feelings, but seemed instantly, and as if by touching a secret spring, to be surrounded with all the same objects, 'subject to the same skyey influences,' the same local, outward, and unforeseen accidents which would occur in reality. Thus the character of Caliban not only stands before us with a language and manners of its own, but the scenery and situation of the enchanted island he inhabits, the traditions of the place, its strange noises, its hidden recesses, 'his frequent

haunts and ancient neighbourhood,' are given with a miraculous truth of nature, and with all the familiarity of an old recollection. The whole 'coheres semblably together' in time, place, and circumstance. In reading this author, you do not merely learn what his characters say—you see their persons. By something expressed or understood, you are at no loss to decipher their peculiar physiognomy, the meaning of a look, the grouping, the by-play, as we might see it on the stage. A word, an epithet paints a whole scene, or throws us back whole years in the history of the person represented. So (as it has been ingeniously remarked) when Prospero describes himself as left alone in the boat with his daughter, the epithet which he applies to her, 'Me and thy *crying* self,' flings the imagination instantly back from the grown woman to the helpless condition of infancy, and places the first and most trying scene of his misfortunes before us, with all that he must have suffered in the interval. How well the silent anguish of Macduff is conveyed to the reader, by the friendly expostulation of Malcolm: 'What! man, ne'er pull your hat upon your brows'! Again, Hamlet, in the scene with Rosencrans and Guildenstern, somewhat abruptly concludes his fine soliloquy on life by saying, 'Man delights not me, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.' Which is explained by their answer: 'My lord, we had no such stuff in our thoughts. But we smiled to think, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment

the players shall receive from you, whom we met on the way'—as if while Hamlet was making this speech, his two old schoolfellows from Wittenberg had been really standing by, and he had seen them smiling by stealth, at the idea of the players crossing their minds. It is not 'a combination and a form' of words, a set speech or two, a preconcerted theory of a character, that will do this: but all the persons concerned must have been present in the poet's imagination, as at a kind of rehearsal; and whatever would have passed through their minds on the occasion, and have been observed by others, passed through his, and is made known to the reader.—I may add in passing, that Shakespeare always gives the best directions for the costume and carriage of his heroes. Thus to take one example, Ophelia gives the following account of Hamlet; and as Ophelia had seen Hamlet, I should think her word ought to be taken against that of any modern authority.

Ophelia. My lord, as I was reading in my closet,
Prince Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd,
No hat upon his head, his stockings loose,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle,
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
And with a look so piteous,
As if he had been sent from hell
To speak of horrors, thus he comes before me.
Polonius. Mad for thy love!
Oph. My lord, I do not know.
But truly I do fear it.
Pol. What said he?
Oph. He took me by the wrist, and held me hard.
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;

And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it: long staid he so;
At last, a little shaking of my arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound,
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,
And end his being. That done, he lets me go,
And with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out of doors he went without their help,
And to the last bended their light on me.

ACT II, Sc. i.

How after this airy, fantastic idea of irregular grace and bewildered melancholy any one can play Hamlet, as we have seen it played, with strut, and stare, and antic right-angled sharp-pointed gestures, it is difficult to say, unless it be that Hamlet is not bound, by the prompter's cue, to study the part of Ophelia.

. . . . .

The passion in Shakespeare is of the same nature as his delineation of character. It is not some one habitual feeling or sentiment preying upon itself, growing out of itself, and moulding everything to itself; it is passion modified by passion, by all the other feelings to which the individual is liable, and to which others are liable with him; subject to all the fluctuations of caprice and accident; calling into play all the resources of the understanding and all the energies of the will; irritated by obstacles or yielding to them; rising from small beginnings to its utmost height; now drunk with hope, now stung to madness,

now sunk in despair, now blown to air with a breath, now raging like a torrent. The human soul is made the sport of fortune, the prey of adversity: it is stretched on the wheel of destiny, in restless ecstasy. The passions are in a state of projection. Years are melted down to moments, and every instant teems with fate. We know the results, we see the process. Thus after Iago has been boasting to himself of the effect of his poisonous suggestions on the mind of Othello, 'which, with a little act upon the blood, will work like mines of sulphur,' he adds:

> Look where he comes! not poppy, nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the East,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou ow'dst yesterday.—

And he enters at this moment, like the crested serpent, crowned with his wrongs and raging for revenge! The whole depends upon the turn of a thought. A word, a look, blows the spark of jealousy into a flame; and the explosion is immediate and terrible as a volcano. The dialogues in *Lear*, in *Macbeth*, that between Brutus and Cassius, and nearly all those in Shakespeare, where the interest is wrought up to its highest pitch, afford examples of this dramatic fluctuation of passion.

. . . . . .

Shakespeare's imagination is of the same plastic kind as his conception of character or passion. 'It glances from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven.' Its movement is rapid and devious. It unites the

most opposite extremes: or, as Puck says, in boasting of his own feats, 'puts a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes.' He seems always hurrying from his subject, even while describing it, but the stroke, like the lightning's, is sure as it is sudden. He takes the widest possible range, but from that very range he has his choice of the greatest variety and aptitude of materials. He brings together images the most alike, but placed at the greatest distance from each other; that is, found in circumstances of the greatest dissimilitude. From the remoteness of his combinations, and the celerity with which they are effected, they coalesce the more indissolubly together. The more the thoughts are stranger to each other, and the longer they have been kept asunder, the more intimate does their union seem to become. Their felicity is equal to their force. Their likeness is made more dazzling by their novelty. They startle, and take the fancy prisoner in the same instant. I will mention one or two which are very striking, and not much known, out of *Troilus and Cressida*. Aeneas says to Agamemnon:

> I ask that I may waken reverence,
> And on the cheek be ready with a blush
> Modest as morning, when she coldly eyes
> The youthful Phoebus.

Ulysses urging Achilles to show himself in the field, says:

> No man is the lord of anything,
> Till he communicate his parts to others:
> Nor doth he of himself know them for aught,

> Till he behold them formed in the applause,
> Where they 're extended! which like an arch reverberates
> The voice again, or like a gate of steel,
> Fronting the sun, receives and renders back
> Its figure and its heat.

Patroclus gives the indolent warrior the same advice.

> Rouse yourself; and the weak wanton Cupid
> Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,
> And like a dew-drop from the lion's mane
> Be shook to air.

Shakespeare's language and versification are like the rest of him. He has a magic power over words: they come winged at his bidding; and seem to know their places. They are struck out at a heat, on the spur of the occasion, and have all the truth and vividness which arise from an actual impression of the objects. His epithets and single phrases are like sparkles, thrown off from an imagination, fired by the whirling rapidity of its own motion. His language is hieroglyphical. It translates thoughts into visible images. It abounds in sudden transitions and elliptical expressions. This is the source of his mixed metaphors, which are only abbreviated forms of speech. These, however, give no pain from long custom. They have, in fact, become idioms in the language. They are the building, and not the scaffolding to thought. We take the meaning and effect of a well-known passage entire, and no more stop to scan and spell out the particular words and phrases, than the syllables of which they are composed. In trying to recollect any other author, one sometimes stumbles, in case of

failure, on a word as good. In Shakespeare, any other word but the true one, is sure to be wrong. If anybody, for instance, could not recollect the words of the following description:

——Light thickens,
And the crow makes wing to the rooky wood,

he would be greatly at a loss to substitute others for them equally expressive of the feeling. These remarks, however, are strictly applicable only to the impassioned parts of Shakespeare's language, which flowed from the warmth and originality of his imagination, and were his own. The language used for prose conversation and ordinary business is sometimes technical, and involved in the affectation of the time. Compare, for example, Othello's apology to the senate, relating 'his whole course of love,' with some of the preceding parts relating to his appointment, and the official dispatches from Cyprus. In this respect, 'the business of the state does him offence.' His versification is no less powerful, sweet, and varied. It has every occasional excellence, of sullen intricacy, crabbed and perplexed, or of the smoothest and loftiest expansion—from the ease and familiarity of measured conversation to the lyrical sounds

——Of ditties highly penned,
Sung by a fair queen in a summer's bower.
With ravishing division to her lute.

QUESTIONS ON THE PLAY

General

1. To what extent is the play to be considered an original work of Shakespeare?

2. Have you thought of any ways in which the play might be improved, either in regard to the action of any of the characters, or by the inclusion of other scenes, or the omission of any?

3. Describe from the point of view of one of the characters one of these scenes:

(*a*) The first meeting (in the play) of Shylock and Antonio.
(*b*) The Casket Scene when one of the suitors makes his choice.
(*c*) The Trial.
(*d*) Portia's home-coming.

4. Try to write a new scene, e.g.:

(*a*) Shylock meets Tubal after the Trial.
(*b*) Nerissa obtains her ring from Gratiano.
(*c*) Gratiano tells Lorenzo and Jessica of the Trial.

5. Take one act of the play and give a clear short summary, not dividing up into scenes, but remoulding into a readable whole.

6. Take any passage of 10–15 lines and try to write it in good modern English, keeping, however, a vocabulary and style fitting the original in spirit and tone.

QUESTIONS ON CHARACTERS

Shylock and Antonio

1. What are Shylock's reasons for hating Antonio? How far do you find them reasonable or understandable?

2. In what ways is Shylock a comic character? and in what ways might he have seemed comic to an Elizabethan audience where we should regard him as pathetic?

3. Why was Antonio beloved by all his friends?

4. What is to be learned of Venetian life from the relations between Shylock and Antonio?

Bassanio and Portia

1. Did Bassanio deserve such a friend as Antonio and such a wife as Portia?

2. Compare Bassanio's behaviour with that of any or all of the other suitors.

3. What attractive womanly qualities do you find well portrayed in Portia?

4. In which scene of the play do you consider Portia appears most likeable?

Other Characters

1. What is the part of Launcelot Gobbo in the play?

2. In what ways were
(*a*) Lorenzo and Jessica
(*b*) Gratiano and Nerissa
well suited to each other?

3. Could any of the minor characters be omitted without robbing the play of some real interest?

4. Are the minor characters treated so as to seem real personalities to you?

QUESTIONS ON THE WORKMANSHIP OF THE PLAY

1. Pick out one or more examples of:

(*a*) An effective simile.

(*b*) A beautiful thought beautifully expressed.

(*c*) Clever play with words.

(*d*) A moving speech.

(*e*) A great saying.

2. Make a list of words, expressions and phrases which are no longer in common use, noting, however, any other cases in which you have met them. (E.g.: *an*=if. But this occurs in the proverb:

> If '*ifs*' and '*ans*' were pots and pans
> There'd be no trade for tinkers.)

3. What passages might be quoted in support of the view that Shakespeare

(*a*) Had travelled abroad.

(*b*) Was a lover of music.

(*c*) Was well acquainted with classical myths and legends?

4. Does blank verse seem to you suitable for such a play as this? Discuss its advantages and disadvantages.

QUESTIONS

5. Take any passage of about ten lines, and mark the stresses, and the feet. If these are not all regular, consider carefully what form the variations take. Then read over the passage aloud, endeavouring to bring out the rhythm without spoiling the sense, and *vice versa*.

DUCATS
(II, viii. 15)

AN ACTING APPENDIX

As soon as any facility in reading Shakespearian blank verse has been attained, and that for average readers should come with practice of a single scene, the play should be read dramatically. It is generally advisable for a class to read over the scenes beforehand, but boys and girls of an average age of a little over fourteen can read through even the trial scene dramatically and very effectively in an ordinary classroom without any previous preparation. When the play has been read through, the question will arise, shall it be acted, or at least some of the favourite scenes? The answer will largely depend on the amount of time that can be spared for it. If it is proposed for public performance the conditions and limits will be very different from those of a performance as part of the school work and activity. But in either case there will probably be a desire to try to produce the scenes on a stage and before spectators. The *Merchant of Venice* is comparatively easy to act, for it has no scenes difficult to stage nor are there many places in which emotions and feelings are so deep or high or obscure that they cannot be entered into by ordinary people.

If it is necessary to select scenes, the following may be suggested as they stand:

The First Meeting of Antonio and Shylock.

The Casket Scene in which Bassanio makes his choice.

The Trial.

The Return to Belmont.

But it will be far more satisfactory to attempt the whole play. A third possibility is to take all the casket scenes which present a certain completeness of themselves.

If the class is composed of boys and girls, the result will certainly be better than if limited to one sex, though no insuperable difficulty will be found if this limitation has to be faced. In Shakespeare's day women were not allowed to perform on the stage, and the three women's parts will not be difficult for boys, nor will girls find the men's parts impossible. In any case there are only three women's parts, and some of the men's parts should go to girls in fairness to the girls of a mixed class. There will no doubt be a fair division of labour in the important parts of preparing costumes and stage properties.

In producing a play the best results will be obtained if it is done as a corporate work, with responsibilities duly assigned and fulfilled. There must, of course, be some one person finally responsible for everything, but that is by no means the same thing as one person, most likely a teacher, bearing an enormous burden of actual work in making arrangements, and in assigning parts, hearing rehearsals, and generally acting as instructor and inspirer. The best as well as the biggest dramatic production which the writer has seen produced at school, was done almost entirely by boys and girls from beginning to end, though help and advice were freely given by adults when asked for. If every one in the class or whatever group may be involved in the play will consider it his show, to which he can contribute something, the performance will become a happy workshop for all, and not an opportunity for a few individuals to make a display. But such work will need careful organizing, and some directing head will

be needful to see that individuals and groups work in co-operation.

I. *How to make the most of the spoken words*

Whether the play is merely being read or the parts learned for repetition and acting, passages should be studied thoughtfully, and spoken with care as to meaning and the manner of expression, even if it proves impossible to bring out all you can think into the part. Every time you repeat a passage, you will see more in it, and constant effort will result in improvement in conveying the meaning to others. Keep the poetry and the rhythm but don't read artificially. The commonest fault of all is to read or speak too quickly. It is almost impossible to say the parts too slowly (except in passages where haste or excitement are implied). While the phrase rather than the word should be the unit, every word should be pronounced clearly, especially the words on which emphasis and sense depend; and the final consonants require special care and clear enunciation. Say an ordinary thing in an ordinary way. Ask a question as a real question. Try to say beautiful lines beautifully, solemn thoughts solemnly, gay thoughts gaily, and so on. Where a word or two imply a whole sentence, practise saying the whole sentence to yourself and the words actually used will easily come with the right inflection, e.g.: 'Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.'—'Ay, ay (he wants) three thousand ducats.'

II. *The difference between Acting and Recitation*

Acting essentially involves consideration of behaviour to suit a situation suggested by the words, and includes

position, bearing, movement of the whole body, gesture and facial expression. Some individuals will at once appear to be more or less naturally fitted for certain parts; e.g. someone whose carriage is good, whose movements are ordinarily a little slow and whose voice is melodious, will be chosen readily for Antonio; another who is rather a noisy knockabout, and perhaps a comical person, for Launcelot; or a cheery girl with a ready smile for Nerissa. For others there may be no obvious choice, and Shylock or old Gobbo may perhaps emerge from unlikely trials. For many promising people turn out to be good actors when they try, often the most quiet and retiring members of a class. Then again capacity for learning must be taken into account with the bigger parts, though with time and practice almost any one can learn a good deal. And experience seems to show that nearly all can act what they understand.

In acting, the most important thing to bear in mind is how the audience sees the characters, and for this it is generally important not only to take up such positions that the actors can be seen, but such that they can also be heard. But in a good room for speaking it is quite a mistake to suppose that this means the actor must always face the audience either wholly or partly. If he can be heard there is no reason why he should not speak occasionally even with his back to the audience if it is natural under the circumstances to get into that position. If these points are borne in mind, they can be worked out in the course of rehearsals.

Gesture is very difficult, and too little is better than too much. There can be nothing worse than wooden or exaggerated flinging about of arms and legs, nothing of greater help to natural acting than a movement of some part of the body such as any one would probably

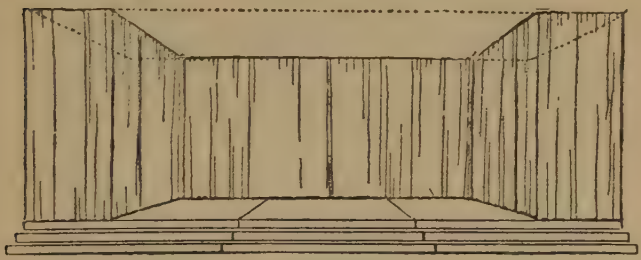
make under the circumstances—a turn of the head, a hearty handshake; these are the little important points which give life and reality to the scene. As with movement about the stage, gesture will largely be evolved naturally as rehearsals go forward if the actor is bent on conveying his meaning fully and effectively.

III. *Staging the Play*

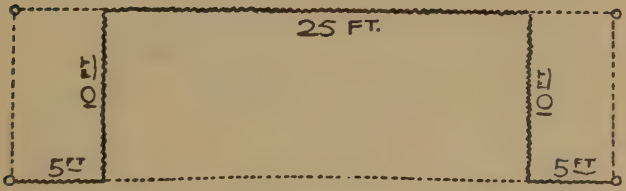
Very little of the elaborate arrangements of the stage familiar to the theatre-goers of to-day is necessary for the production of an amateur performance—or for the matter of that of a professional performance—of the *Merchant of Venice*. All that is essential is a good platform about twenty-five feet by twelve feet. For convenience in allowing preparations to go on without attracting the attention of the audience, as well as for suggesting a definite scene, it is best to have this enclosed by curtains at the back and each side, while a pair of curtains in front, running easily on horizontal wires to meet in the centre, enable the necessary changes of properties to be made unobserved. If all these aids are present, with easy access at least from each side and, if possible, from behind, a satisfactory presentation is possible.

No attempt should be made to paint scenery in the ordinary sense, but effort should be directed to simple and bold effects which will suggest at once whether the scene takes place in a street, or a room, or in a garden. Just how this is done must depend a good deal on the nature of the walls of the stage. If they are draperies, street doors and a window or two can be painted boldly on material which can be pinned on to the curtains. Chairs and tables and other doors will show an interior.

A few imported shrubs, or leafy branches of trees, and a rustic seat will be enough for a garden. In the elopement scene it will be necessary for Jessica to speak from a height, but probably no great difficulty will be



ELEVATION



GROUND PLAN

PLAN OF STAGE

encountered in designing a window-frame to be attached to the drapery at a sufficient elevation. For the casket scenes, curtains are required which can be drawn back. But in all these cases the simpler the device the better, so long as the right impression is created. The attention of the audience must not be distracted from the

characters and their doings by either extraneous beauty and cleverness of device, or by amusing makeshifts.

IV. *Lighting*

It may help one to remember that Shakespeare's plays were originally produced in daylight, and there is no necessity for a darkened room and a brilliantly lighted stage. What is essential is that the stage shall be adequately lighted, but if this is best attained by the full illumination of the hall in which the audience is, there is no great objection to having it so. Footlights may be used, but produce harsh and awkward shadows unless a similar set of lights can be placed about the height of the wire supporting the front curtain; care must, of course, be taken that such lights are invisible to the audience, to whose eyes they would be very trying.

V. *Costumes*

Costumes are of course important, but it is far better to improvise these than to hire them. They should, as far as possible, accord with sixteenth-century Venetian style, but accuracy in detail does not really matter, and if dresses used for other plays are obtainable, but little modification of design may be necessary. What is important is that the dresses should be in keeping with the characters.

The materials need not in any case be costly, and the adaptation of old dresses and costumes will offer scope for much ingenuity and taste. Antonio will obviously be dressed soberly, Bassanio must look the wealthy

ARRAS STAGE AS AN INTERIOR

ARRAS STAGE AS A GARDEN

ARRAS STAGE AS A STREET

gentleman, and Gratiano be gaily clad, but not so as to be more imposing than his master. Portia, too, must be dressed finely, but with richness rather than show, while Nerissa may well suggest sprightliness by her dress as well as by her talk. Shylock will wear a yellow, round flat cap, the distinctive mark of Jews at Venice, and a long cloak. For the rest, it will be sufficient that the clothes are in keeping with the station in life or occupation suggested by the characters, and that in general a good deal of colour should be introduced.

VI. *General*

The circumstances under which the play may be produced are so various that only the most general suggestions have been given here. But a great deal of help will be found in Mr Roy Mitchell's *Shakespeare for Community Players* (Dent & Sons), which is probably the most useful book that is easily obtainable. It is full of excellent suggestions upon all the subjects briefly touched on in these notes.

SELECTION OF TITLES

GRADED AND ARRANGED UNDER SUBJECTS

The ages mentioned in this list are only approximate; in choosing the books teachers should make allowance for local conditions and the ability of the pupils.

KINGS TREASURIES OF LITERATURE

ALLEGORY, MYTHOLOGY, FAIRY TALES, etc.

For Junior Forms (Ages 10–13)

10. THE ADVENTURES OF ODYSSEUS. Retold from Homer in English prose by F. S. Marvin, R. J. G. Mayor, and F. M. Stawell. 224 pp.

With a simple Introduction, a complete Pronouncing Index of Proper Names, and an Epilogue dealing with the stories told about Homer and Homeric poetry. The Illustrations help greatly in re-creating the environment of the *Odyssey*, from which the tale of the wanderings is directly drawn.

14. A WONDER-BOOK FOR BOYS AND GIRLS. By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. Edited by E. M. Wilmot Buxton. 256 pp.

This book contains the stories of The Gorgon's Head; The Golden Touch; The Paradise of Children; The Three Golden Apples; The Miraculous Pitcher; and the Chimæra. With simple explanatory footnotes, a Commentary containing Exercises, an Essay on hero-stories, and a Pronouncing Index of Proper Names.

24. THE HEROES. By CHARLES KINGSLEY. Edited by E. M. Wilmot Buxton. 224 pp.

Footnotes are provided as well as a useful Commentary containing a Life of Kingsley, Exercises, and a Pronouncing Index of Proper Names.

38. THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. Slightly abridged from Part I of the Allegory by JOHN BUNYAN. Edited by the late Margaret A. Gilliland, M.A., with a dramatized version by N. T. Carrington, M.A. Illustrated. 256 pp.

This edition has been specially prepared for those teachers who hesitate to use Bunyan's great work because of its theology, and who yet wish to introduce their pupils to the great Allegory as a story of adventure.

50. STORIES FROM LE MORTE D'ARTHUR and the Mabinogion. By BEATRICE CLAY. 192 pp.

This book contains the full story of Arthur and the Round Table told simply after the style of the originals.

60. THE WATER BABIES. By CHARLES KINGSLEY. Abridged and Edited by Lucy Menzies. 224 pp.

The abridgment has been skilfully made so as to leave the story complete in itself. A life of the author, suitable for younger children's reading, appears at the end of the volume.

94 THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS. By MARY STURT, M.A., and ELLEN C. OAKDEN, M.A. Illustrated. 160 pp.

In simple language the authors have attempted to give younger pupils not merely a collection of 'Stories from Chaucer,' but a complete idea of the *Canterbury Tales*, and the people who told them, together with the interesting circumstances of their immortal journey.

119. THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER. By JOHN RUSKIN. *To which are added for comparison*, THE BLACK BROTHERS, AND OTHER STORIES. 128 pp.

Containing full text of Ruskin's story, with the original Doyle illustrations.

141. THE ROSE AND THE RING. By W. M. THACKERAY. Edited by Phyllis M. Preston. 192 pp.
Thackeray's famous fairy-tale with his original pictures.

170. TANGLEWOOD TALES. By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. Edited by Guy N. Pocock, M.A. Illustrated by W. H. Birch. 256 pp.

186. NORSE LEGENDS. Retold from the Eddas by MRS STEPHEN HOBHOUSE. 256 pp.
These are delightful legends of the Norse gods and goddesses retold by an author who is well known as a lecturer on the art of telling stories for children. These stories of the gods and goddesses, giants and dwarfs, and strange beasts of Norse mythology are more than mere tales retold, for the author has gone back to the Eddas, and so has been able to keep the strong, rugged, yet strangely childlike spirit of the originals, and also their very close bearing on natural phenomena. The book is equally suitable for junior and older pupils.

195. ALICE IN WONDERLAND, with The Hunting of the Snark, and Poems from *Sylvie and Bruno*. By LEWIS CARROLL, with the original illustrations by the author. 192 pp.

198. ROBIN HOOD AND OTHER TALES OF OLD ENGLAND. Retold by MRS STEPHEN HOBHOUSE. Illustrated. 256 pp.
Admirable as old ballads are, there are a great many children, and teachers too, who prefer the stories in prose. Mrs Hobhouse, the author of *Norse Legends* in this series, has retold the most famous of the Robin Hood stories, and other old English tales, in her own inimitable style. Suggestions for composition included.

241. STORIES FROM DANTE. By E. BIGG-WITHER. 192 pp.
Dante's masterpiece, *The Divine Comedy*, is here told in quite simple language, and the author, a distinguished Italian scholar, has cleverly contrived to keep the spirit of the original.

For Lower Middle Forms (*Ages 12–14*)

21. TALES FROM ANDERSEN. Edited and selected by Reed Moorhouse. 256 pp.

37. THE STORY OF THE 'ILIAD.' Retold from Homer by F. S. MARVIN, R. J. G. MAYOR, and F. M. STAWELL. With Portrait of Achilles. 224 pp.

This volume is uniform with *The Adventures of Odysseus* (*see* No. 10).

87. RIP VAN WINKLE and Other Stories. By WASHINGTON IRVING. 192 pp.

In addition to the title-story this volume contains The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Westminster Abbey, and The Sketch Book.

THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE

85. A BIBLE ANTHOLOGY. 256 pp.

The compiler has collected in this little volume a number of passages from the Old and New Testaments (Authorized Version) which can be used in the ordinary English lesson as examples of the many and varied literary forms which are included in Hebrew literature and in the English renderings of New Testament Greek.

BIOGRAPHY

232. SEVENTY YEARS A SHOWMAN. By 'LORD' GEORGE SANGER. With an Introduction by Kenneth Grahame. 216 pp.

This book, the autobiography of a world-famous showman, is a vivid picture of England as Charles Dickens must have seen it. The essay which is printed as an introduction to the book is considered by some to be, as literature, Kenneth Grahame's finest work.

For ages 12–14

12. FORM-ROOM PLAYS—JUNIOR BOOK—First Series. Compiled from Literature by Evelyn Smith, B.A. 256 pp.

Containing the following pieces dramatized from the original sources, with full stage and costume directions: The Swineherd (Hans Andersen); The Parlement of Foules (Chaucer); Thor's Hammer (Norse Folklore); The Death of Balder (Norse Folklore); The Travelling Companion (Hans Andersen); The Cock and the Fox (Chaucer); A Christmas Carol (Charles Dickens); The Perfect Holiday (L. M. Alcott's *Little Women*); Alice in Wonderland (Lewis Carroll); Circe's Palace (Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales*); Robin Hood (Old English Ballad); The Lady of the Lake (Sir Walter Scott); A Midsummer Night's Dream (William Shakespeare).

131. FORM-ROOM PLAYS—INTERMEDIATE BOOK. Compiled by Evelyn Smith, B.A. 224 pp.

Containing the following pieces dramatized with full stage and costume directions: The Goosegirl (Grimm); The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse; The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweeper (Andersen); A Visit to London; The Fool of Dunvegan; Havelok the Dane; The Enchantment of Finn; Gudrun (Germanic legend); The Siege of Ping (Chinese legend); The Kitchen Knight (Malory); The Marchioness (Dickens); The Escape from Lochleven (Scott); Alice and the Caterpillar.

184. PLAYS FOR MIDDLE FORMS. Edited by Reed Moorhouse. 256 pp.

A collection of delightful plays particularly suitable for middle forms, including Brother Sun (Laurence Housman); The Only Legend, a Masque of the Scarlet Pierrot (John Drinkwater); The Ox and the Ass (Hilary Pepler); An Old Wives' Tale, adapted (George Peele); Goblin Market, adapted and dramatized (Christina Rossetti); Piper's Pool (Helen H. A. Hope); Six who pass while the Lentils Boil (Stuart Walker); The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great, adapted (Henry Fielding); Everyman (adapted); Selling his Ancestors from *The School for Scandal.*

206. CLASS-ROOM PLAYS FROM GREAT NOVELS. Adapted by Dora Hollom, B.A. 192 pp.

Experience has proved that the dialogue portions of famous novels put into dramatic form make admirable reading in class. Miss Dora Hollom, the well-known author and teacher, has made a selection of scenes from the great novels, including *Westward Ho!*, *Cranford*, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*, and has arranged them as class-room plays.

252. JUNIOR FORM-ROOM PLAYS—Second Series. By Dorothy and Diana Scott. 192 pp.

Containing the following little plays adapted from well-known stories: Ameliaranne; Tom Sawyer; Through the Looking-glass; Rip Van Winkle; The Rose and the Ring; David Copperfield with his Aunt; The Pied Piper; The Tinder-box; Hansel and Gretel; The Pilgrim's Progress; The Pardoner's Tale; King John and the Abbot of Canterbury; Get up and bar the Door; Joseph and his Brethren; David and Goliath.

For ages 14 and over

65. FORM-ROOM PLAYS—SENIOR BOOK. Compiled from English Literature by Evelyn Smith, B.A. 256 pp., including 10 pp. of Music.

Containing dramatized pieces from *The Mill on the Floss*, *Quentin Durward*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Northanger Abbey*, and *Comus*, as well as specially prepared passages from Sheridan's *The Critic* and Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*.

126. THE RIVALS. By Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Edited by John Hampden, M.A. 192 pp.

This favourite classic is given in full, but it has been specially arranged for acting in school. Unsuitable parts are enclosed in brackets.

147. THE SHOEMAKER'S HOLIDAY. By THOMAS DEKKER. Edited by Guy N. Pocock, M.A. 160 pp.

A school edition—not an abridgment—of this delightful citizen play, with a full Commentary containing Questions and Exercises, also an Acting Appendix.

149. SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER. By OLIVER GOLDSMITH. Edited by John Hampden, M.A. 192 pp.

With a Commentary containing Questions and Exercises and an Acting Appendix.

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